SATURDAY
April 15, 2023

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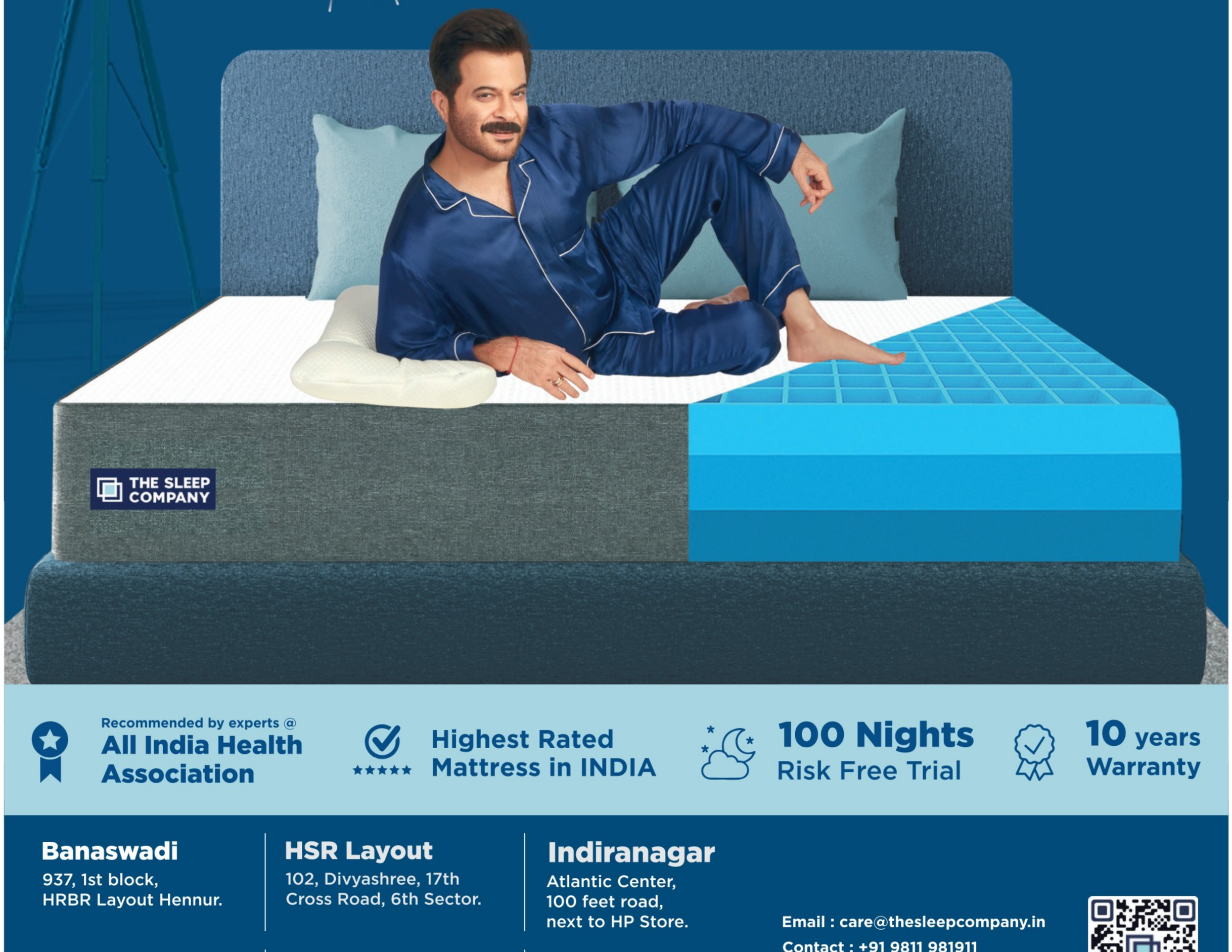

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EXCISE POLICY CASE

CBI summons Delhi CM Kejriwal tomorrow

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QUAKE WATCH

NASA-ISRO eye on the Himalayas

NEWS » PAGE 12

DISQUALIFICATION IMPACT

Rahul begins vacating his official bungalow

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DISSENT ON CAMPUS

Kalakshetra's summer of discontent

Sexual harassment charges rock arts hub

GROUND ZERO » PAGE 9

FIRST CENTURY OF IPL 2023

Brook ton sets up Sunrisers' victory

SPORTS » PAGE 15

Northeast gets its first AIIMS, slew of projects

PM inaugurates super-speciality hospital, 3 medical colleges in Assam; says development becomes impossible when politics of dynasty, regionalism, corruption and instability start to dominate

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in the Northeast at Changsari near Guwahati on Friday.

The AIIMS and a medical college each in Kokrajhar, Nagaon, and Nalbari were among various projects worth more than ₹3,400 crore he initiated and dedicated to the nation in Assam.

Mr. Modi had laid the foundation stone of the AIIMS in May 2017. The super-speciality hospital, built at a cost of ₹1,120 crore, has a capacity of 750 beds including 30 AYUSH beds and will admit 100 MBBS students annually.

Easy access: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria visiting the AIIMS in Guwahati on Friday. PTI

Among the projects Mr. Modi initiated on Friday is the Assam Advanced Healthcare Innovation Institute (AAHII) within the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati complex. Officials said the AAHII will be a research and innovation centre in the area of medical sciences, which includes a 500-bed 'connected' multi-speciality hospital on over 12 acres.

"We are moving forward with the mantra of India's development through the development of the North-east... The government's policy, intentions and commitment are not driven by self-interest but by the spirit of 'nation first and people first'," Mr. Modi said at the inaugural function.

Apparently taking a dig at the Congress, which had once been invincible in the Northeast, he said development becomes impossible when the politics of dynasty, regionalism, corruption, and instability start to dominate.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Congress leaders offer Pilot 'bigger party role'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath has been roped in to play the mediator in an effort to avert an impending crisis in the party unit in Rajasthan.

The stand-off between Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and senior leader Sachin Pilot is now threatening to derail the party's campaign for Assembly election scheduled at the end of the year.

According to sources, Mr. Nath, along with party general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, met Mr. Pilot on Thursday evening. The two, it is learnt heard out Mr. Pilot and also proposed a meaty role for him in Delhi as a peace offering.

However, this failed to cut ice with the rebel leader who remains adamant about sticking to his turf in Rajasthan. It is learnt that several viewpoints were put forward to Mr. Pilot, including dire predictions about the party's electoral performance in Rajasthan.

Keeping that in mind, he was told, that he should cool his heels in Delhi and wait for favourable political climate in the State. The new Congress Working Committee, the highest decision-making body of the party, is expected to be formed next month after the Karnataka Assembly election. Mr. Pilot has been told that he will get a seat in the high table along with important responsibility.

State of flux: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot speaking to the media in Jaipur on Friday. PTI

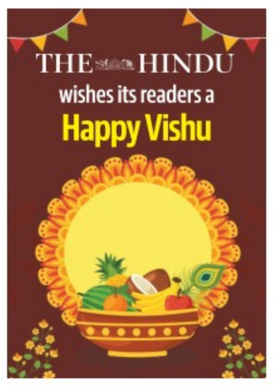
CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

NEARBY

Arun Singh's warning to those quitting BJP

BENGALURU
Close on the heels of a slew of disappointed ticket aspirants quitting the party, BJP national general secretary in charge of Karnataka Arun Singh on Friday warned that the party would not open its doors in the near future to those who were quitting the party organisation now. » Page 6

PROPERTY PLUS » PAGE 5



Dancing into record book

In sync: Women dancing at the Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati on Friday, a day after they set a world record for the largest Bihu performance at a single venue. RITU RAJ KONWAR (REPORT ON PAGE 10)

Former Deputy CM Savadi joins Congress

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI/ BENGALURU

The former Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi, who was denied a ticket by the ruling BJP to contest from the Athani seat in Belagavi district, on Friday joined the Congress. He also resigned from the membership of the Karnataka Legislative Council.

Mr. Savadi, a three-time MLA for Athani, had lost the 2018 election to Mahesh Kumathalli, then in the Congress, who eventually joined the BJP in 'Operation Lotus'. The BJP has, this time, given ticket to Mr. Kumathalli, which has angered Mr. Savadi.

Mr. Savadi, who on Thursday, said he was ending his relationship with the BJP, met senior Congress leaders, including former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar and AICC general secretary Randeep Surjewala in Bengaluru on Friday morning and later joined the party.

Later, he tendered his resignation to the Legislative Council seat before formally joining the Congress in the evening. Mr. Shivakumar and AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala were present.

Laxman Savadi at the KPCC office in Bengaluru. PTI

Mr. Shivakumar said that in 63 constituencies the BJP had seen rebellion, with its leaders planning to contest independently or moving to the Janata Dal (Secular) or the Congress.

"About 90% of the defectors are coming to the Congress. Today is a historic day in Karnataka politics since senior leader Mr. Savadi is joining the Congress," he said. Mr. Surjewala said Mr. Savadi had contributed to the State's growth story.

"The only demand I have placed is for a ticket in Athani, and if the Congress comes to power, pending irrigation projects in Athani have to be completed. Congress leaders have asked me to canvass in other districts, which I will do," he told reporters here after the meeting.

Asked if his joining the Congress would lessen BJP leader Ramesh Jharkiholi's influence in Belagavi, he said, "You will know that when results are announced." On whether there was a fight between Valmiki and Lingayats in Belagavi district, he said, "There is no such thing in Belagavi. We are all together."

'No call from BSY'

Mr. Savadi also clarified that former Chief Minister and BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa had not called him.

To criticism by the BJP that he was rewarded despite his defeat in 2018 Assembly polls, Mr. Savadi shot back, "Did I ask them to make me an MLC and Deputy Chief Minister? Why did they drop me? Did I have any corruption charges against me? Is it not an insult?"

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai expressed sadness at Mr. Savadi leaving the party. "He has found his political future in the Congress. The Congress does not have candidates in 60 seats, so they are taking some people into the party."

RELATED REPORT ON » PAGE 6

No ticket for Bhavani Revanna

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ending days of suspense over who will be picked to contest from the Hassan seat, Janata Dal (Secular) on Friday announced the candidature of H.P. Swaroop, overlooking Bhavani Revanna, who had been lobbying hard for the key constituency.

The second list of candidates with 50 names was on Friday announced by party leader and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, who was strongly opposed to his sister-in-law and wife of H.D. Revanna being given the ticket, and had been batting for Mr. Swaroop. This had led to fissures within the family.

However, the brothers were together while announcing tickets, in a show of all being well within the family. Mr. Revanna claimed that his wife had voluntarily stepped aside "in the interest of Mr. Gowda's health". The patriarch was known to upset with the disharmony in the family. The second list also featured Y.S.V. Datta for Kadur seat, who had briefly left for Congress only to return to the partyfold within months.

DETAILS ON » PAGE 6

Drones to deliver life-saving drugs to Char Dham pilgrims

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Drones will be used to deliver life-saving drugs to Char Dham pilgrims during any emergency, according to Health Ministry officials. Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri – all 10,000-ft-high pilgrimage sites in the Garhwal Himalayas – will be covered under this.

"The decision to engage drones to deliver medicines in high-risk areas during an emergency was taken following recognition of the urgent need to offer immediate medical service to those in need," said a senior Health Ministry official.

Pilgrims' progress: The move comes after Uttarakhand flagged a rise in health emergencies among pilgrims. K.R. DEEPAK

120 deaths in 27 days

There were 120 deaths in just 27 days during the Kedarnath yatra in 2022, according to a study conducted by the Government Doon Medical College in Uttarakhand titled 'Mortality at the Kedarnath Pilgrimage Trek in 2022: A Possible Interplay between Post-COVID Syndrome and High-Altitude Mountain Sickness'.

"This mortality is not on a par with the previous years... there were 90, 102 and 112 deaths in the six-month travel window in 2019, 2018, and 2017, respectively," noted the study, expressing concern over this acute unexpected rise in deaths.

The government is also working on creating a three-layered structure to provide health support and emergency management infrastructure for pilgrims.

This follows Uttarakhand's request to the Ministry. The Ministry was also informed of the health challenges faced by pilgrims along the strenuous route, and the number of deaths in the past few months due to emergencies such as strokes. Many of these casualties were pilgrims who suffered from co-morbidities, according to Uttarakhand Health Minister Dhan Singh Rawat.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

U.S. guardsman arrested in leak of classified military documents

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

A Massachusetts Air National Guard member was arrested on Thursday in connection with the disclosure of highly classified military documents about the Ukraine war and other top national security issues, an alarming breach that has raised fresh questions about America's ability to safeguard its most sensitive secrets.

The guardsman, an IT specialist identified as 21-year-old Jack Teixeira, was taken into custody without incident after FBI officers converged on his Massachusetts home.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said he is to be charged with removing or transmitting classified national defence information, a crime under the Espionage Act.

Mr. Garland did not reveal a possible motive behind the leak.

DETAILS ON » PAGE 13

GETTY IMAGES

Ons Jabeur: the trailblazing, trick-shotting artist on a Major quest

The 28-year-old from Tunisia is inspiring a generation of African and Arab players – and doing it with an inimitable style of inventive, cerebral and very successful tennis. If she realises her ambition of winning a Grand Slam title, her transformational impact will grow even larger

N. Sudarshan

Tennis as a sport has long lent itself to artistic expression. In the decades gone by, many players have come to be seen as virtuosos, with parts of their games having acquired cult status.

Martina Navratilova's athleticism, Steffi Graf's grace, John McEnroe's volleying, Justine Henin's court-craft, Fabrice Santoro's magic hands, Agnieszka Radwanska's imagination and the whole of Roger Federer's oeuvre... the list can go on.

In a heavily coached sport, where strokes and playing styles mostly follow pre-set templates and set-in-stone methods, these players have given the impression that tennis can sometimes be more art than science. Prototypes are still commonplace, but there is space for the iconoclasts and independent thinkers, too.

Ons Jabeur, a self-confessed romantic, is the latest entrant in this exotic list. Friendly, charming and always sporting a big smile, the 28-year-old Tunisian is among the most creative of today's tennis players.

She is ranked No. 4 in the world and on Sunday triumphed at the Charleston Open (WTA 500) by beating Switzerland's Belinda Bencic, earning her first title of the season, her second on clay and the fourth of her career. Having struggled with a knee injury since the Australian Open, it was Jabeur's return to her competitive best.

> I am working on a lot of things and it is going my way, step by step. I am going for the Grand Slam this year. We will start with one and go on to the multiple

Ingenious stroke production

And if those gasps and yelps from many an onlooker, when Jabeur came up with breathtaking drop shots, ingenious slices and trick shots, including the front-facing tweener, are enough of a barometer, she might just be this era's ticket to tennis as 'religious experience'.

Jabeur's stock has largely been built on her superlative performance in the 2022 season. She excelled on clay, making the final at Charleston, winning in Madrid (WTA 1000) and finishing runner-up in Rome (WTA 1000) to Iga Swiatek.

Though she crashed out in the first round at Roland-Garros, she quickly dusted it off to win on grass at Berlin and made a captivating run to the final at Wimbledon, where her finesse and feel for the surface stood out.

Jabeur's success wasn't limited to the natural surfaces. At the US Open, she reached her second Major final, losing to top-ranked Swiatek but not before firmly establishing her credentials as the foremost challenger to the Pole's status as tennis' undisputed No.1.

What aided this was a silken all-court game. At 5'6", Jabeur is diminutively built compared to her peers and doesn't possess the big serve which could have given her the first-mover advantage.

Staying true to herself

But she compensates with her intelligence, hitting a dazzling array of shots at varying trajectories and angles. Jabeur's tennis is cerebral and witty, something that is said to have been her trademark as far back as 2011 when she won the junior French Open singles title. She didn't give up on the approach despite taking six more years to break into the WTA top-100.

If on grass she uses the slice to great effect, on clay, her drop shots and variations – even when devoid of top-spin – help her exploit all areas of the court. In fact, since the start of the 2020 season, Jabeur has won 38 matches on clay, the most by any player on Tour, one more than Swiatek, who won both the 2020 and 2022 Roland-Garros crowns.

"I just want to continue with this attitude, with this game," Jabeur told *Tennis Channel* after the Charleston triumph.

"I am glad that I am finding rhythm and I hope my body will allow me to play.

"I am excited to go to Stuttgart, Madrid and Rome. Clay is really amazing and I love it. I am working on a lot of things and it is going my way, step by step. I am going for the Grand Slam this year. We will start with one and go on to the multiple."

If she does, an already trailblazing career will hit greater heights. Jabeur comes from a part of the world where tennis is, at best, a hinterland sport. In North Africa, football is all the rage. Liverpool's Mo Salah was reportedly favoured by over a million people in the 2018 Egyptian Presidential election when he wasn't even a candidate.

But such has been Jabeur's influence – first Tunisian to reach a WTA final (Moscow 2018), to make a Slam quarterfinal (2020 Australian Open), to crack the top-50 (February 2020), to win a WTA title (Birmingham 2021) and to secure a WTA 1000 title (Madrid 2022) – that, according to newspaper reports, there are now "dozens of mini Onses chasing down balls or practising their forehand each evening" back in Tunisia.

Abdullah Shelbayh is a Jordanian tennis player ranked 265 in the world. In February this year, the 19-year-old became the youngest Arab in history to reach the final of an ATP Challenger event. Both Shelbayh and Jabeur were coached by a certain Rafik Bouchlaka in their formative years.

> Both Wimbledon and US Open were tough losses and I learnt a lot. But it always takes me time. I won my first WTA [title] after losing a few finals. Maybe it will be the same for a Grand Slam

"He [Bouchlaka] always gave me examples of how Ons worked and how badly she wanted it," Shelbayh told *Arab News*. "Ons was his example always, which motivated me a lot.

"Now, it's great to have someone like her in the Arab world at the top of the game. It's incredible to have, for the first time ever, someone that high in the ranking. I hope I can be there as well and hope I can learn a lot from her."

It is perhaps apt that Jabeur is a tennis player, for the sport has often been a force for advancement. The Grand Slam tournaments pay men and women equally – something Jabeur wants in every tennis event – and no other sport produces as many male and female global champions. This sits well with her higher "mission" of inspiring women and elevating the game.

However, the history-making star and transformative champion doesn't feel burdened and remains as focused on the on-court job. She is now part of a WTA Tour that seems to have finally settled down. It has a dominant force in Swiatek and a pecking order. If Swiatek and Jabeur formed a duopoly last year, the likes of Aryna Sabalenka, Elena Rybakina and Jessica Pegula have joined the party this season.

"Both Wimbledon and US Open were tough losses for me and I learnt a lot," Jabeur told *The Guardian*. "But it always takes me time. I won my first WTA tournament after losing a few finals. Maybe it will be the same for a Grand Slam. I want to maintain a great level so I can maybe dominate the WTA tour."

PEAK RANKING
World No. 2

CAREER TITLES
4

CAREER WIN-LOSS%
64.73%

STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Novak Djokovic	35	7,160	16
2	Carlos Alcaraz	19	6,780	18
3	Stefanos Tsitsipas	24	5,770	21
4	Casper Ruud	24	5,255	25
5	Daniil Medvedev	27	5,150	23
6	Andrey Rublev	25	3,470	25
7	Felix Auger-Aliassime	22	3,450	26
8	Jannik Sinner	21	3,345	20
9	Holger Rune	19	3,335	26
10	Taylor Fritz	25	3,065	22
11	Frances Tiafoe	25	2,870	23
12	Karen Khachanov	26	2,855	23
13	Hubert Hurkacz	26	2,750	23
14	Cameron Norrie	27	2,735	23
15	Rafael Nadal	36	2,715	14

Top Indians ▶

Sumit Nagal
Rank 370 ▲ 2 spots

Mukund Sasikumar
Rank 382 ▲ 6 spots

WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	21	8,975	17
2	Aryna Sabalenka	24	6,891	18
3	Jessica Pegula	29	5,735	17
4	Ons Jabeur	28	5,031	16
5	Caroline Garcia	29	4,990	23
6	Coco Gauff	19	4,346	18
7	Elena Rybakina	23	4,305	21
8	Daria Kasatkina	25	3,505	25
9	Maria Sakkari	27	3,191	23
10	Petra Kvitova	33	3,162	17
11	Belinda Bencic	26	2,870	21
12	Barbora Krejcikova	27	2,443	19
13	Veronika Kudermetova	25	2,360	22
14	Beatriz Haddad Maia	26	2,276	24
15	Liudmila Samsonova	24	2,246	21

Top Indians ▶

Ankita Raina
Rank 221 ▲ 20 spots

Karman Thandi
Rank 274 ▼ 5 spots

English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	30	23	4	3	72	29	43	73
2	Man. City	29	21	4	4	75	27	48	67
3	Newcastle	29	15	11	3	48	21	27	56
4	Man. United	29	17	5	7	44	37	7	56
5	Tottenham	30	16	5	9	55	42	13	53
6	Aston Villa	30	14	5	11	41	40	1	47
7	Brighton	28	13	7	8	52	36	16	46
8	Liverpool	29	12	8	9	50	35	15	44
9	Brentford	30	10	13	7	47	40	7	43
10	Fulham	29	11	6	12	39	40	-1	39
11	Chelsea	30	10	9	11	29	31	-2	39
12	Palace	30	8	9	13	29	40	-11	33
13	Wolves	30	8	7	15	24	42	-18	31
14	West Ham	29	8	6	15	27	39	-12	30
15	Bournemouth	30	8	6	16	28	57	-29	30
16	Leeds United	30	7	8	15	39	54	-15	29
17	Everton	30	6	9	15	23	43	-20	27
18	Nott. Forest	30	6	9	15	24	54	-30	27
19	Leicester City	30	7	4	19	40	52	-12	25
20	Southampton	30	6	5	19	24	51	-27	23

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	28	23	3	2	53	9	44	72
2	Real Madrid	28	18	5	5	59	24	35	59
3	Atletico Madrid	28	17	6	5	45	20	25	57
4	Real Sociedad	28	15	6	7	37	26	11	51
5	Villarreal	28	14	5	9	37	26	11	47
6	Real Betis	28	13	6	9	34	29	5	45
7	Athletic Bilbao	28	11	7	10	38	29	9	40
8	Osasuna	28	10	8	10	24	28	-4	38
9	Rayo Vallecano	28	9	10	9	33	33	0	37
10	Celta Vigo	28	9	9	10	36	39	-3	36
11	Girona	28	9	8	11	42	42	0	35
12	Real Mallorca	28	9	7	12	25	30	-5	34
13	Sevilla	28	8	8	12	33	44	-11	32
14	Cadiz	28	7	10	11	23	40	-17	31
15	Getafe	28	7	9	12	27	36	-9	30
16	Almeria	28	8	6	14	34	48	-14	30
17	Real Valladolid	28	8	5	15	23	47	-24	29
18	Valencia	28	7	6	15	30	34	-4	27
19	Espanyol	28	6	9	13	34	46	-12	27
20	Elche	28	2	7	19	20	57	-37	13

Italian Serie A Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Napoli	29	24	2	3	66	21	45	74
2	Lazio	29	17	7	5	46	20	26	58
3	Roma	29	16	5	8	39	26	13	53
4	AC Milan	29	15	7	7	48	36	12	52
5	Inter Milan	29	16	3	10	48	33	15	51
6	Atalanta	29	14	6	9	47	34	13	48
7	Juventus *	29	18	5	6	47	24	23	44
8	Bologna	29	12	7	10	38	36	2	43
9	Fiorentina	29	11	8	10	34	32	2	41
10	Udinese	29	9	12	8	39	36	3	39
11	Torino	29	10	8	11	30	35	-5	38
12	Sassuolo	29	10	7	12	37	43	-6	37
13	Monza	29	9	8	12	34	41	-7	35
14	Empoli	29	7	11	11	25	36	-11	32
15	Salernitana	29	6	11	12	33	49	-16	29
16	Lecce	29	6	9	14	25	35	-10	27
17	Spezia	29	5	11	13	25	45	-20	26
18	Verona	29	5	7	17	24	43	-19	22
19	Cremonese	29	2	10	17	26	54	-28	16
20	Sampdoria	29	3	6	20	18	50	-32	15

** 15 points deducted after investigation into club's past transfer dealings*

German Bundesliga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Bayern	27	17	7	3	77	29	48	58
2	Dortmund	27	18	2	7	59	36	23	56
3	Union Berlin	27	15	6	6	42	30	12	51
4	RB Leipzig	27	14	6	7	50	33	17	48
5	SC Freiburg	27	13	8	6	39	36	3	47
6	Leverkusen	27	13	4	10	51	41	10	43
7	Eint. Frankfurt	27	11	8	8	48	40	8	41
8	Mainz	27	11	8	8	45	38	7	41
9	Wolfsburg	27	10	9	8	46	36	10	39
10	M'gladbach	27	9	8	10	42	44	-2	35
11	Bremen	27	9	5	13	42	52	-10	32
12	Cologne	27	7	10	10	36	45	-9	31
13	FC Augsburg	27	8	5	14	35	50	-15	29
14	Hoffenheim	27	8	4	15	37	46	-9	28
15	Bochum	27	8	2	17	30	60	-30	26
16	Stuttgart	27	5	8	14	32	47	-15	23
17	Hertha Berlin	27	5	7	15	31	50	-19	22
18	Schalke	27	4	9	14	21	50	-29	21

Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Marnus Labuschagne	915	937
2	Kane Williamson	883	919
3	Steve Smith	872	947
4	Joe Root	871	923
5	Babar Azam	862	882
6	Travis Head	853	853
7	Usman Khawaja	815	815
8	Daryl Mitchell	792	800
9	Rishabh Pant	766	801
10	Dimuth Karunaratne	749	782

Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	869	904
2	James Anderson	859	903
3	Pat Cummins	841	914
4	Kagiso Rabada	825	902
5	Shaheen Afridi	787	836
6	Ollie Robinson	785	820
7	Jasprit Bumrah	780	835
8	Nathan Lyon	757	774
9	Ravindra Jadeja	753	899
10	Kyle Jamieson	742	836

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	887	898
2	Rassie van der Dussen	777	796
3	Imam-ul-Haq	740	815
4	Shubman Gill	738	738
5	David Warner	726	880
6	Virat Kohli	719	911
7	Quinton de Kock	718	813
7	Rohit Sharma	707	885
9	Steve Smith	702	752
10	Fakhar Zaman	699	779

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Josh Hazlewood	705	733
2	Trent Boult	694	775
3	Mohammed Siraj	691	736
3	Mitchell Starc	686	783
5	Matt Henry	676	691
6	Rashid Khan	659	806
7	Adam Zampa	652	655
8	Shaheen Afridi	641	688
9	Mujeeb Ur Rahman	637	712
10	Shakib Al Hasan	636	717

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Suryakumar Yadav	906	910
2	Mohammad Rizwan	811	875
3	Babar Azam	755	831
4	Aiden Markram	748	896
5	Devon Conway	745	796
6	Rilee Rossouw	724	724
7	Muhammad Waseem	716	716
8	Dawid Malan	705	915
9	Aaron Finch	680	900
10	Jos Buttler	670	674

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Rashid Khan	710	816
2	Fazalhaq Farooqi	692	797
3	Josh Hazlewood	690	692
4	Wanindu Hasaranga	686	806
5	Maheesh Theekshana	684	746
5	Adil Rashid	684	743
7	Adam Zampa	678	688
8	Sam Curran	673	745
9	Mujeeb Ur Rahman	668	695
10	Anrich Nortje	667	680

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J BG-BGE

Governments change, but auto, taxi drivers say it's still not an easy ride

Though random checks have now stopped, drivers complain that they are subjected to a lot of harassment

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

Despite a long list of complaints passengers have against at least a section of them, autorickshaws and taxis remain an integral part of the transport ecosystem in the city as the reach, availability, and efficacy of public transport continues to remain questionable. Yet, autorickshaw and taxi drivers say they have had the same set of problems - on and off the road - for years, and government after government has not been able to solve them.

Spending most hours on the road, drivers have constant run-ins with the traffic police. Even though random checks have now stopped, drivers complain that they are subjected to a lot of harassment. They alleged that bringing this to the notice of many Ministers in the past has yielded no results.

Manjunatha, an auto driver from Mathikere, said, "Often, we are stopped by traffic police officers. They usually use a disrespectful tone with us even when we have all our documents in place. The government should look into this."

Although the prices of fuel or LPG are not in the hands of the State government, drivers believe that the elected representatives should use their positions to push for the welfare of the common people. "We elect them, and they become Ministers because of that. But when they must represent us at the national level, they are not of much help. Why do they never advocate or push for cutting LPG prices to help common men like us?" questioned Ganesha K., an auto driver in Shivajinagar.

The drivers also said that the selection of candidates has become a headache for them with no particular party having ever worked in their favour. "Should we look at the men at the top and vote? That does not work as the ground level leader might not be competent. This leaves us with the obvious option of looking for those who work for our welfare, but we cannot find any such leader," said Nawaz A., a cab driver from M.S. Palya.

M. Manjunath, president, Adarsha Auto Union, and Tanveer Pasha, Ola Uber Drivers and Owners' Association, put forth some expectations from the new government, mainly with regards to the implementation of the Drivers' Development and Welfare Board which was announced by former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa. They also asked for a specific drivers' day on the calendar, a group housing scheme, a convention centre, educational scholarships, and better health schemes for the drivers.

(This is the fourth part of a series on what people want - people from sectors whose voices are often unheard, and who are not on the top of priorities in votebank politics.)

Autorickshaw and taxi drivers in the city have constant run-ins with the traffic police. FILE PHOTO

On the road

No. of auto drivers in the city	No. of cab drivers in the city
2.5 lakh (approximately)	5 lakh (approximately)

Key demands of drivers

- End to harassment by traffic police
- Measures to reduce the fuel/gas price burden
- Implementing Drivers' Development and Welfare Board
- Introducing group housing scheme and build 'Sarathi Bhavana' (convention centre)
- Dedicating a date in the calendar as Drivers' Day
- Better health and insurance schemes

Karnataka Votes 2023

Over 90 vehicles destroyed in fire at Avalahalli

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A fire destroyed over 90 vehicles parked at Avalahalli police station on Thursday afternoon. Senior police officers visited the spot and ordered an investigation.

This is the second such incident since March when 40 vehicles seized by the Kodigehalli police and parked in the yard behind the station were destroyed in a fire that broke out after a suspected electrical short circuit.

The SI, the station house in charge at Avalahalli, in her plaint, said she was informed by constable Harini about the fire at the southern side of the station backyard covering four acres of land. She and 10 police staff tried to put out the fire. But the dry weather and grass caused it to spread rapidly and engulfed the vehicles before the Fire and Emergency Services personnel arrived. The police alerted the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company to disconnect the power line, and five tenders were pressed into service to douse the fire.

The goods and furniture were shifted to a safer place while the fire tenders, after four hours of struggle, managed to contain the blaze. As many as 68 two wheelers, 15 three wheelers and 4 four wheelers were gutted.

SI Gayathri, in her complaint, said she suspected that unknown people set fire to the dry grass and bushes to make it look like an accident. The police registered an FIR against unknown persons under section 435 (commits mischief by fire or any explosive substance intending to cause, or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby cause, damage to any property) for further investigations.

Deputy Commissioner & District Election Office, Dharwad-580001

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.ಕಸಾಚು/ಮಹಿ–01 /2023
ದಿನಾಂಕ 13–04–2023

(Corrigendum)

Please refer public notice page number **3** of this paper published on **14-4-2023**. In column **2** Navalgund constituency number should be read as **69** instead of **169**

Sd/- District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner, Dharwad District, Dharwad

PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients Sri. Saleem Basha .S, S/o. Sri. Shameer Basha .S and his wife Smt. Shaik Naveentaj have intending to purchase of the schedule property mentioned hereunder for a valuable consideration with its owner Smt. N. Shwetha, W/o. Sri. Vasanth .N, Residing at No. 213, Chatri Nagar, Behind Lakshmi Narayana Swamy Temple, Ballur, Attibele, Bangalore-560 107.

If any persons, banks, financial intuitions etc., having any claims, right, title and interest whatsoever over the schedule property may forward their objections to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents of your such claims, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which it will be deemed that there are no claims, right, title and interest by anybody and my client will proceed for completion of sale transaction and thereafter no claims will be considered.

SCHEDULE

Vacant Site No. 8, Chandapura TMC Khata No. 3801/575/8, formed in converted land bearing Sy. No. 93/2, vide conversion order No. B.Dis. ALN. SR. (A) 121/1988-89 dated 07-03-1989 situated at Chandapura Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk. Measuring East to West 50 Sq. Ft and North to South 30 Sq. Ft in all measuring 1500 Sq. Feet and bounded on: East by :Road, West by : Site No. 13, North by :Site No. 9, South by : Site No. 7.

MANJUNATHA & ASSOCIATES
K. N. MANJUNATHA CHARY, ROOPA. B, & B.N. JAGADISH KUMAR, Advocates, # 96, 1 Floor, 1 Main, 4th Cross, Maruthi Nagar, Madiwala, Bangalore-560068
Mob: 9845965626, 7406090832
BANGALORE, DATE : 14-04-2023

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The Filled in Application Form in a sealed two cover system duly superscribing part "A" and Part "B" and name of the product to be supplied for which the application is made be addressed to **"The Managing Director, TANFED, Chennai -18".** The application must be accompanied by prescribed earnest money Deposit by way of Demand Draft for the respective amount as mentioned in part A of the application. The application forms should reach the above mentioned office on or before **9.05.2023** latest by **12.00 Noon.** The Filled in Application forms received will be opened by the State level Committee, in the presence of the applicants who choose to be present at that time and details will be registered based on the eligibility .

Chennai -18
Dated : 12.04.2023 DIPR / 374 / Display / 2023 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

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GETTY IMAGES

‘You aren’t remembered for playing semifinals, you are remembered for winning World Cups’

Marizanne Kapp looks back at South Africa’s historic T20 World Cup campaign, the inaugural edition of the WPL and spouse Dane van Niekerk’s decision to retire. The great all-rounder also talks about continuing to learn and improve even after 18 years in cricket

> I have been really surprised by a lot of the Under-19 girls from India... Just imagine where they will end up and where this league will take the Indian team

INTERVIEW

Marizanne Kapp

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Marizanne Kapp was tipped to be one of the most expensive players at the inaugural edition of the Women’s Premier League. She is not merely one of the finest all-rounders in the game – she has 3,545 runs and 223 wickets in international white-ball cricket – but is a serial-winner of franchise leagues as well. Remarkably, she was the Player-of-the-Match in three big finals: The Hundred in England (2021 and 2022) and the WBBL in Australia (2021).

But, surprisingly, she didn’t excite the franchises at the auction in the manner in which Smriti Mandhana, Nat Sciver-Brunt or Ashleigh Gardner did. While Smriti was signed by Royal Challengers Bangalore for ₹3.4 crore, Sciver-Brunt and Gardner were each paid ₹3.2 crore by Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Giants respectively.

Delhi Capitals got Kapp for ₹1.5 crore. That was a bargain. Not surprisingly, she emerged as one of the WPL’s standout performers and found herself in yet another league final. But this time she ended up on the losing side: Capitals were beaten by the mighty Mumbai Indians at the Brabourne Stadium.

That defeat wasn’t the only disappointment Kapp had to deal with during her time in Mumbai last month. Her spouse and South Africa teammate Dane van Niekerk announced her retirement from international cricket – she was hurt by her omission from the T20 World Cup team – during the WPL.

> Everyone has benefited from the WPL — even myself, someone who has been playing for 18 years

Kapp revealed that she cried on the Capitals team bus when she learnt of her partner’s decision. That day, she took five for 15, against Gujarat Giants, and watching her live at the D.Y. Patil Stadium was van Niekerk, who was part of the RCB squad.

In an interview with *The Hindu*, Kapp spoke about being the only girl who played cricket in her locality, South Africa’s commendable campaign in the T20 World Cup at home, the WPL, the cricketer she continues to be a huge fan of even though he rarely plays now and van Niekerk’s retirement. Excerpts:

How do you look back at the recent T20 World Cup in South Africa?

The support we received at the World Cup from the crowds was amazing. Becoming the first senior South African side [male or female] to reach an ICC World Cup final was a highlight. It was a very proud moment for us. But still, you won’t be remembered for playing semifinals, you will be remembered for winning World Cups. We can’t get stuck on us reaching the final. Even though we are proud, our main aim is still to win the World Cup.

Dane van Niekerk wasn’t part of that South African team. She announced her retirement from international cricket during the WPL, at the age of 29.

But look at her career. Even though she is just 29, she has been playing for 14 years. I don’t think you should just look at the numbers. She has had a brilliant career. And I hope she continues to play in these leagues. Both of us made our debut for South Africa during the 2009 World Cup in Australia. Obviously I am sad that she won’t be playing for South Africa again. And I felt the same when Lizelle Lee and Mignon du Preez also retired. We played together for so many years. It is disappointing to know that they won’t be there in the South African team any more.

At the WPL, Dane didn’t get to play a game...

That is something about these leagues. RCB has been so good to her; she had not been playing a lot of cricket. She was a bit nervous. She was treated well. Everybody would have loved to see her on the park. But finding her feet again and being in a team environment also mattered a lot to her.

Your thoughts on the WPL?

I have been part of a few franchise leagues, so I wasn’t sure of what to expect, especially because the WPL happened at such short notice. I was pleasantly surprised by how well it was run and the talents on display. After coming from South Africa, playing on the wickets here in India was a different experience. Batting was a bit easier. I wasn’t too happy with my bowling in the first few games – it took a while to adjust to the conditions.

I have been really surprised by a lot of the Under-19 girls from India, by how well they are playing for their age. Just imagine where they will end up and where this league will take the Indian women’s cricket team.

Everyone has benefited from the WPL – even myself, someone who has been playing for 18 years. I have learnt from batting on the wickets here: they became slow and started to turn. You learn so much, you get better.

You came up with the best bowling figures at the WPL – five for 15 from four overs against Gujarat Giants. It was one of the finest spells of the tournament. Would you term it as one of your best in the format?

That probably was my best. There was a spell of mine in the WBBL, in which I was on four-for, but [the catch for] my five-for got dropped.

What are your earliest memories of cricket?

Probably as the only girl playing cricket. I remember my mother asking the school principal whether I could join the boys’ team. Back then there was no women’s cricket, especially at school level.

Growing up, who were your idols in cricket?

They were all from South Africa – Jacques Kallis, Shaun Pollock and Allan Donald.

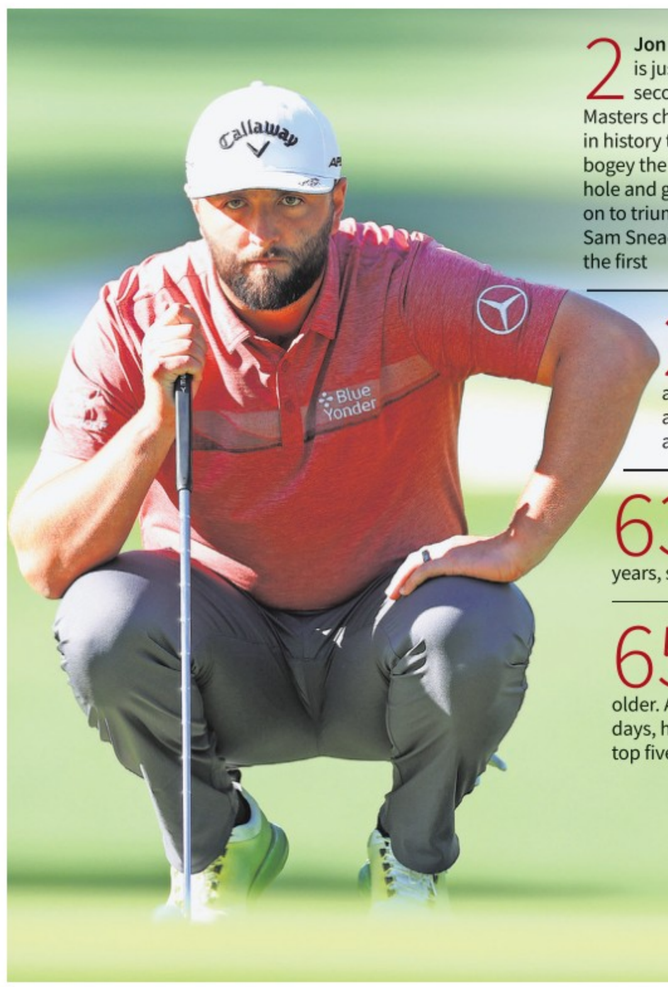
Any current cricketers that you look up to?

I love watching Virat Kohli bat. I have been an M.S. Dhoni fan. I have always thought he was absolutely amazing. Though he is no longer playing international cricket, I am one of his biggest fans. And yes, I will be watching him at the IPL.

GAME THEORY

The Masters in numbers

From Jon Rahm’s comeback win to Fred Couples and Phil Mickelson defying Father Time, we take a look at five of the most interesting stats from the 2023 Augusta Masters:



2 **Jon Rahm** is just the second Masters champion in history to double bogey the opening hole and go on to triumph. Sam Snead was the first

4 Rahm is only the fourth man to win both the Masters and the US Open from multiple shots back entering the final round. Jack Nicklaus, Gene Sarazen and Byron Nelson, the others

23 Tiger Woods may have had a difficult time of it, but he made the cut for a 23rd consecutive time, tying the all-time record held by Fred Couples and Gary Player

63 Couples, by the way, became the oldest player to make the cut this year at the age of 63 years, six months and five days

65 Phil Mickelson’s final-round 65 is the lowest round in Masters history by a player aged 50 or older. At 52 years, nine months and 24 days, he is also the oldest to finish in the top five

PICTURE THIS

BJOERN REICHERT/NORDICFOCUS/GETTY IMAGES

A bird? A plane?

This photograph from the Ski Flying World Cup in Planica, Slovenia, earlier this month offers a glimpse of one of the most extreme things humans do for sport.

Ski flying involves athletes skiing down a specially designed take-off ramp, jumping off it and gliding as far as possible before landing stably in a target zone further down the sloped hill.

In competition, these ‘flights’ are judged on both distance and style.

The sport’s origin can reportedly be traced back to March 1936 in Planica, where Austria’s Josef Bradl, then just 18, became the first man in history to land a jump measuring more than 100 metres (101.5m).

Another Austrian, Stefan Kraft, holds the current world record of 253.5m, set in March 2017.

The sport, which demands the ability to maintain an aerodynamic shape in flight and harness the wind, requires purpose-built ski hills.

Although very popular — ski flying can draw crowds of 30,000 to 60,000 in Europe — the sport’s dangers are very real because of the extreme speeds and heights involved, as well as the unpredictable wind conditions.

Pedestrians in peril with no foot overbridge between K.R. Puram railway, metro stations

Police manning the junction located under the cable bridge say that every day 20,000 to 25,000 people cross the road

Suchith Kidiyoor
BENGALURU

As the junction is located under the cable bridge, it is very difficult to judge the movement of vehicles due to poor visibility, say pedestrians. SUCHITH KIDIYOOR

Despite being an eagerly awaited project, the opening of the Namma Metro line between K.R. Puram and Whitefield has again proven that the integration of various modes of transport is an afterthought for authorities.

Near Krishnarajapuram railway station, in the absence of a foot-over-bridge (FoB) connecting the railway station and the newly opened K.R. Pura metro station, thousands of pedestrians are risking their lives to cross the busy road.

Police manning the junction located under the cable bridge say that every day 20,000 to 25,000 people cross the road.

The area is more crowded now

"Krishnarajapuram railway station is one of the prominent railway stations. If a long-distance train comes, 350 to 1,500 passengers get down at this point. Considering their safety, traffic police and home guards help them cross the road in batches by stopping traffic movement. To man the junction, four to five constables, three home guards, an ASI and an SI rank police are deputed," said a senior traffic police official, who also said that the construction of the FoB would ease the traffic movement and help the pedestrians in a big way.

A BMRCL official says a foot overbridge will be built for the benefit of pedestrians, and work is on

Mahadeva R., a pedestrian, said, "It is very risky to cross the road. As the junction is located under the bridge, it is very difficult to judge the movement of vehicles due to poor visibility. At regular intervals, they block the traffic to allow pedestrians to cross the road, but it is a difficult task. The number of pedestrians increased after the Whitefield metro line opened. After getting down from the K.R. Pura station, many passengers cross the road to board buses going towards the Silk Board side. The authorities should construct an FoB connecting two stations as early as possible."

Problem at other railway stations too

This is not the first time that the authorities are "de-prioritising" integration of the various modes of transport or providing last or first-mile connectivity. At Majestic, providing seamless connectivity between various modes of transport is yet to become a reality. Non-integration of metro and railway stations at Yeshwanthpur is another example. Improvement of road networks is being planned after opening Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal at Baiyappanahalli, which was built after spending a whopping ₹320 crore.

Urban Mobility expert Ashish Verma said, "Integration of various modes of transport and providing seamless connecting access to the mass transit systems should be prioritised while conceptualising and designing the project. Providing easy access helps in increasing footfall as well as ensuring more comfortable travel for pedestrians. I am hopeful that the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA) will come up with a comprehensive plan for the integration of various modes of transport and providing feeder services in the newly opened line."

An official of the BMRCL said, "At K.R. Pura metro station, an FoB will be built across the road for the benefit of the pedestrians. Preliminary work is on. Due to some land issues, there was some delay. Now, everything has been sorted out, and work will be resumed. At Whitefield station, a decision on integration with railway station will be taken after consulting authorities concerned."

Notice Inviting Tender (Spot Basis)

Reliance Industries Limited (**"RIL"**) and BP Exploration (Alpha) Limited (**'bp'**), (RIL and bp shall also be collectively referred to as the "Sellers", and individually the **"Seller"**) have entered into a Production Sharing Contract for the Block KG-DWN-98/3 (KG-D6) dated 12 April 2000 with the Government of India. The Sellers intend to sell Crude Oil produced from the Block (KG-D6 Crude Oil).

On behalf of the Sellers, RIL invites bids from eligible bidders having the necessary capability and requisite statutory & regulatory clearances, for purchase at Sellers' option of approximately 15,500 Barrels (@ 2,450 KL) of Crude Oil on Spot Basis.

2,450 KL of Crude Oil will be made available Ex-Works at **NCS Industries Pvt Ltd, (NCS) Suryarao Peta Panchayat, Thammavaram, New Port Area, East Godavari District, Kakinada (Rural), Andhra Pradesh, India ("NCS Facility")** or at such other point as may be agreed between the Parties in writing (the **"Delivery Point"**), for the period between **01st May 2023 –31st May 2023**.

Prospective bidders are requested to visit **www.ril.com/eB2B/RIL-KGD6-Crude2.aspx** and download the detailed Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) document, which includes instructions to bidders and the Draft Crude Oil Sale Agreement (COSA). Prospective bidders are requested to follow instructions as detailed in the NIT document to participate in the bidding process.

Inviting bids through the NIT document does not in any manner constitute any commitment or obligation on the part of the Sellers to supply KG-D6 Crude Oil unless the same is recorded through a final and binding written COSA executed between the Sellers and the prospective bidder, subject to requisite approvals. The absolute right to award bids rests with the Sellers and the NIT document does not impose or create any legally binding obligation whatsoever on the Sellers.

The bids should be submitted / sent only at e-mail mentioned in NIT by **15:00 hrs IST on 24 April 2023** (**"Bid Due Date"**) and the same will be opened at **16:00 hrs IST on 24 April 2023**.

Head FC&A – E&P Domestic Business,
Reliance Industries Limited
Reliance Corporate Park, Bldg. No. 12, A-Wing, 2nd Floor,
Thane-Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai - 400 701.

Reliance Industries Limited
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bp

Three bookies running online cricket betting racket nabbed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The patrolling team of Cubbon Park unearthed an inter-state online betting racket and caught four bookies who were operating through an app near CTO Junction on Queens Road on April 11.

The accused bookies, hailing from Haryana, were getting live updates from their associates in the stadium and placing bets accordingly. A probe revealed that there was around 10 seconds gap between the live match and the relay on TV. The accused utilised the 10 seconds gap to get live ball-to-ball updates from their associates and receive the bets accordingly online. This helped them manipulate betting and earn huge profits, said the police.

The racket was busted when the police found the accused operating the mobile phones and confronted them. Detailed questioning led them to confess to the crime. They have been detained and brought to the station.

The accused have been booked under various sections of Karnataka Police Act, 1963, and efforts are on to track downss their associates who are operating from different states.

Fake paint manufacturer caught

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The V.V. Puram police on Friday arrested a man trying to sell fake paint products under reputed brands.

Based on a tip off, a team of police caught the accused Chunnilal and seized a truck load of paint he was trying to push in the N.T. Pete Market .

The team raided the fake paint manufacturing unit situated in Hesaraghatta and seized sub-standard paint and products worth ₹20 lakh. The accused was operating in the city for months, manufacturing and selling sub-standard paints.

Timings
BENGALURU

SATURDAY, APR. 15			
RISE	06:07	SET	18:32
RISE	02:23	SET	14:09
SUNDAY, APR. 16			
RISE	06:07	SET	18:32
RISE	03:13	SET	15:09
MONDAY, APR. 17			
RISE	06:06	SET	18:32
RISE	03:58	SET	16:05

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	25
Mysuru	36	24
Bengaluru	36	20

Bengaluru Today
36°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist & haze. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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HC pulls up postal authorities

Twelve years after the account was opened, the petitioner was told that the scheme had lapsed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has asked the postal authorities to set their house in order in this digital age on finding that they woke up from slumber 12 years after an account, under a higher interest scheme, was opened irregularly four years after the scheme itself had lapsed, and refused to pay any interest to the account holder.

"The postal authorities must detect irregular accounts as soon as they are opened by intermittent scrutiny mechanism and inform such investors immediately... failing which the officers who manage such accounts should be held responsible and accountable for such dereliction of duty... so that the common man should not bear the brunt of unnecessary litigation," the court said. Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order while partly allowing a petition filed by one K. Shankarlal of Vyalikaval in Bengaluru questioning the department's action of refusing to pay any interest on his deposit.

The petitioner opened an account under the name, Hindu Undivided Family-Public Provident Fund scheme in September, 2009, at Malleswaram post office through an agent, and was regularly depositing amount as per the terms of the scheme as the account was to mature on March 31, 2023.

Shock after 12 years

To his shock, he received a communication from the postmaster on September 23, 2021 stating that his account was an irregular one as it was opened after the scheme itself was discontinued with effect from April, 2005.

The petitioner's correspondence with the postmaster and the the Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Bengaluru West division, did not resolve the issue, as the department closed his account and refused to pay even the interest at savings bank account rate on the deposited amount.

The court said that petitioner, who had opened the account for accumulating money for his daughter's marriage, was in no way responsible for the fault as it was the postal authorities who received the deposit amount for 12 years even though they were aware that the scheme did not exist after March 31, 2005.

"The action of the postal authorities in denying interest and directing closure of the account holding it to be irregular does not behove its status being a State under Article 12 of the Constitution of India, as the impugned action is far from fairness," the court observed.

Direction

The court directed the department to pay interest at higher rate as per the lapsed scheme till September 23, 2021, the date on which the petitioner was informed about the lapsed scheme; and the interest at scheduled bank lending rate from September 2023 till the maturity of the deposit.

New addition

Zebra Kaveri, at Bannerghatta Zoological Park, gave birth to a foal at 4.30 a.m. in Bengaluru on Friday. The foal will be under observation by the zoo's veterinary team and animal keeper.

Traffic advisory for IPL match today

Traffic arrangements have been made to ensure smooth flow of traffic between 12.30 p.m. and 9 p.m. in view of the IPL cricket match at Chinnaswamy stadium on Saturday

No parking on the following roads

Central Street Road, Cubbon Road, St. Mark's Road, Museum Road, Queen's Road, M.G. Road to Cubbon Road, Raj Bhavan Road, Kasturba Road, Ambedkar Veedi Road, Trinity Junction, Lavelle Road, Vittal Mallya Road, and Nrupatunga Road

Traffic diversion

- KSRTC and private buses, and goods vehicles from Siddalingaiah Circle towards M.G. Road will be diverted via Residency Road
- Goods vehicles are not allowed on Queen's Road

Parking places for public
(Subject to availability)

- UB City parking lot, King's Road, BRV Ground below metro lane, Kanteerava Stadium
- BMTC TTMC Shivajinagar 1st floor and old KGID building

'Political will required to build sustainable transport system'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Urban mobility expert and former Secretary of Mobility for Bogota, Columbia, Felipe Ramirez emphasized that political will plays a crucial role in building sustainable transport systems in cities like Bengaluru. On Friday, Mr. Ramirez, who is also Director, Urban Mobility World Resources Center, delivered a talk on 'Transforming urban mobility in mega cities: lessons from Bogota' and interacted with the audience at Bangalore International Center.

The city of Bogota implemented one of the largest Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) networks and other sustainability mobility infrastructure by promoting bicycle-sharing systems.

He said that considering the population of Benglauru, the city needs to increase the fleet size of city buses from 6,500 to 15,000 to make public transport more accessible and effective. "It might be a little difficult to adopt the BRTS model here, with the population of Bengaluru embracing the metro," Mr. Ramirez said.

Mr. Ramirez, on his first visit to Bengaluru, highlighted the similarities between the city and Bogota, stating that both are big cities that face challenges related to traffic congestion and transportation. He added that the need for a transportation system that is inclusive of all sections of society is necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of all modes of transport. "Provide the public with a fully connected network and make it reliable; otherwise, do not ask the people to use public transport," he added.

He recommended cycling as a viable and sustainable mode of transport in Bengaluru. "There is no city better than Bengaluru for cyclists. The city has a lot of greenery. The government needs to build something that is safe for the people and make sure there is a proper network," he said.

He also spoke about Bogota's approach to building accessible buses, "One needs to pay attention to accessibility while designing buses," he said. "There is no such thing as profitable transport," Mr. Ramirez added, responding to a question on viability gap funding by the government. "The government must invest in a better transportation system, keeping in mind accessibility to the public."

RRI unravels mystery behind absence of dust in galaxy GN-z11

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Scientists of the Raman Research Institute (RRI), in a study, have found the GN-z11 galaxy to have a complete absence of dust particles from its surroundings for an interim time period despite possessing a very high star formation rate.

GN-z11 is identified as one of the distant and early galaxies, first discovered in 2015 by the Hubble Space Telescope.

Astronomers, intrigued by the absence of dust in GN-z11, have tried to unravel the mystery behind it, and RRI scientists have inferred the possible physical characteristics of the violent dynamical events that could have resulted in the destruction and evacuation of dust from the galaxy on a relatively short time, making it transparent. "It is mind-boggling to think when and how GN-z11 gathered so much gas, which ultimately collapsed to form massive stars and remained dust-free. And all this, while the galaxy came into existence when our universe was very young, that is, around 420 million years," said lead author Prof. Biman Nath, senior RRI faculty.

Some reasons to explain temporary disappearance of dust clouds, the study states, are – the suppression of dust by reverse shocks from a supernovae explosion, destruction of dust by supernovae-triggered shocks, evacuation of dust by gaseous outflow driven by other stellar activity. Likewise, the re-emergence of the dust veil could be linked with the massive gravitation force possessed by GN-z11.

Betel leaf tea bags released

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Mysuru-based start-up, Eshanya Beverages, on Friday formally released 'Betel leaf tea bags', which was developed at NITTE (Deemed to be University) DST Technology Enabling Centre (DST TEC).

Sandeep Eshanya, a resident of Vijayanagar in Mysuru, said he quit his job in Bengaluru during COVID-19 second wave. He read a research paper on betel leaf tea. "I was fascinated with the idea as I come from the land of betel leaf and approached a few start-up incubation firms." NITTE DST TEC agreed to support him and NITTE University's Centre for Science Education and Research was asked to study the product.

B.S. Mamatha from NITTE's CSER said they researched for a year on how the leaves can be dried and cut into small pieces to release the natural taste when placed in hot water. "It took a year to come out with the product that had mild and natural taste of betel leaf," Ms. Mamatha said, adding the product retains the health benefits of betel leaf.

LOST

Smt. Sunandamma W/o. Late. Senappa. her house document No 247/69-70, 245/69-70. said document misplaced dated on 05.04.2023 for this compliant lodged to the concerned Police station Lost Report No. 0524177, in case of this Document trace out to any one person please contact mobile No : 9964555772, 9346437428

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PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform General public that my client intends to purchase the immoveable properties more fully set out in the Schedule given below owned by **Sri. B. SANTOSH,** Son of Sri. Basavaraju, Residing at No.337, 8th Main, Vidhyapeeta, Bangalore 560 085, who declare that he is absolute owner and is in continuous possession of the properties.
Any person/s, institutions, banks etc. whomsoever having any valid right, title and interest or charge/ claim in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, shall write to Undersigned along with the documentary proof of such ownership or claim on the Schedule Property **within 10 days from the date of this notice,** failing which it shall be deemed by my Client that Schedule Property is free of all encumbrances, charges, claims, interest of whatsoever of any nature and my client shall proceed aforesaid transaction with the aforesaid owner as if no such claims exist or that they have been waived or abandoned.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of land converted for non-agricultural residential purpose morefully described hereunder both situated at **Manchanayakanahalli Village, Bidadi Hobli, Ramanagara Taluk, Ramanagara District:**

Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Acres	Boundaries			
			East By	West By	North By	South By
1.	53/4 (Old Survey No.53)	1-02	Sy.No.5	Sy No.53/1 belonging to Leelavathi	Sy.No.16 belonging to Thimmegowda.	Sy.No.52
2.	53/5 (Old Survey No.53)	0-20	Sy.No.16 belonging to Channamuddaiah	Land belonging to B. Santhosh in Sy.No.53/4	Sy.No.16 belonging to H.L.Ramanna	Sy.No.52 belonging to Anjanamma and Jagadish.

Vaishali Basawanal, Advocate, **VSB Law Associates**
312, III Level, Prestige Meridian II,
29-30 M.G. Road, Bangalore-560001, Ph No: 9844091496

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client **Chethan K.S, S/o Shankar,** R/a No.20, 10th Cross, Brundavan Layout, Kadiganahalli Village, Bettahalsur Post, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore 562157is the full and absolute owner of the property described in the schedule hereunder and my client reliably learnt that the third parties are acting detrimental to the interest of my client and are attempting to deal with the schedule property prejudicial to the interest of my client. Any person dealing with the any/third party/s in respect of the schedule property will not be legal, valid and the same will not be binding on my client and such person/s will not be derive any right, title or interest in the Schedule property and all such transactions will be void-ab-inito.

SCHEDULE

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the immovable Property being an immovable property bearing **Site No.20**, Katha No. 1015/798/20, presently under Sonnappanahalli Grama Panchayath PID No. 150200202100202250, situated at **KADIGANAHALLI VILLAGE, Jala Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk,** along with RCC Roofed house constructed measuring 7 Squares RCC Roofed 7 Square of ACC Roofed House both the houses with Red-oxide flooring, Junglewood Doors and Windows with all the civic amenities of common use, Measuring East to West : 12.192 Mtrs or 40 Feet,North to South : 9.144 mtrs or 30 Feet,**Totally 111.48 Sq. mtr or 1200 Square Feet,** and bounded on:

EAST BY :Site No.25
WEST BY : Road
NORTH BY :Site No.19
SOUTH BY : Site No.21

K.S. RAGHAVENDRA
M/s. LAW ASSOCIATES
Advocates
No.40/2, 1st Floor, 2nd Cross Achaiah Setty Layout, RMV Extension, Bangalore 560 008. Phone : 23613681

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the General Public that my client **N.KIRAN KUMAR REDDY, S/o Sri.N.Ramakrishna Reddy,** Aged about 45 years, Residing at No.37/40, Sanjiv Nagar Colony, Rayachoti, Kadapa District, Andhra Pradesh-516 269, Also at No.Flat No.B-302, Durga Petals, Outer Ring Road, Doddanekkundi, Bangalore-560 037. Aadhaar No.2256 2090 9631, has recently lost the original Sale Deed dated:23.11.1995, vide Document No.7542/1995-96, Book-I, Volume 4369, pages 98 to 104 registered in the office of the Sub Registrar, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore executed by The Aircraft Employee's Co-Operative Society Limited., in favour of Sri.Yesudass and Sale Deed dated:15.05.2006, vide Document No.BAS-1-03785/2006-07, Book-I, stored in C.D.No.BASD241, registered in the office of the Sub Registrar, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore, Original Possession Certificate Dated:15.12.2001 and No Objection Certificate dated:15.12.2001, in respect of **Site No.1625,** Having BBMP Khatha No.2697/1625 **[Block 'A'],** situated at **Survey Nos. 6/1 and other survey numbers of Singasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore District** in the Layout plan of the AECS Society approved by the Bangalore Development Authority and as per the order of the Bangalore Development Authority dated: 12.11.1992, No. BDA/TPM/ DD/1263/92-93, related to the plots of lands as mentioned in the deed above measuring East to West 30 feet and North to South 40, totally measuring in all **1200 Square Feet** and my client has lodged a complaint on 12.04.2023 before Parappana Agrahara Police, Bangalore.
If anyone finding the above original title deed is requested to hand over the same to the undersigned within **seven (7) days** from hereof and my client will assure of appropriate reward to such person:

M.R.REVANNA, Advocate
No.264, 1st Floor, Behind Ganesh Temple
Begur Road, Bommanahalli
Bangalore-560068. Ph:99806 28324

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general Public that, our client **Sri. C.R. Manohar, Son of Sri. P. Rangaswamy,** Aged about 43 years, Residing at No.36, G.L. Residency, Bagalur Main Road, Sarjapura Village & Post, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore-562125 has lost / misplaced the below mentioned original documents in respect of Survey Number 348/2, measuring 03 Acres 06 Gunta, situated at **Bidaraguppe Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District.** He has lodged online Police Complaint on 12.04.2023, at HSR Layout Police Station.

1. Sale deed dated 26.09.2005, vide Doc no. 8773/2005-06
2. Sale Deed dated 27.07.2006, vide Doc. No. 14204/2006-07
3. Sale Deed dated 27.07.2006, vide Doc. No. 14208/2006-07
4. Sale Deed dated 26.09.2005, vide Doc.no. 8769/2005-06
5. General Power of Attorney dated 07.11.2006, vide Doc.No.923/2006-07
6. General Power of Attorney dated 18.11.2006, vide Doc.No.688/2006-07
7. General Power of Attorney dated 30.12.2006, vide Doc.No.776/2006-07
8. General Power of Attorney dated 10.11.2006, vide Doc.No.666/2006-07

Whoever finds the documents kindly handover the same to our Office at below mentioned address. The Public is hereby cautioned not to transact with anybody claiming to be the owners of the above said holding the lost Documents. Any transactions made without our knowledge will be at their cost.

M/s. Jury Legal Solutions,
Advocates,
No. 8, 14th Cross, 14th Main, 4th Sector, HSR Layut, Bangalore-560102.
M : 9902195500 / 9844897355
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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RADHIKA Vijay, Date of Birth 02-11-1975, W/o Vijay Chander Srinivasan, R/o #288, 6th Cross, Near KFC, Indiranagar 1st Stage, Bengaluru-560038 have changed my name from Radhika Vijay to Radhika Vijay Chander vide affidavit dt: 14-04-2023 before Notary A. R. Muneer Ahmed, B'luru.

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

RENE ABRAHAM
died on 13.04.2023
It is with great sadness we announce the demise of Rene, a loving husband, devoted family member and friend to many.
You left too soon and will be missed.
Funeral rites on April 15 at Cheppaud, Kerala, from 10 am.
Abraham family
Asirvatham family
Bhattacharya family

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SIXTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

MVM. SOLAYAPPAN
Not a single moment goes by without you in our thoughts, Life only gets livable knowing and believing you are watching over us always. Forever in our hearts.
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THE HINDU

Are tiny homes trending?

Priced between ₹3 lakh and ₹50 lakh, these flexible structures have caught the attention of homebuyers, says **Avneesh Sood**

As the housing market continues to evolve, a new trend has emerged: tiny homes. These small, compact houses have become quite popular in recent years, as more and more people embrace a minimalist lifestyle. With their affordable price points, eco-friendly features, and unique designs, tiny homes are reshaping the housing industry in significant ways.

So, what exactly are tiny homes? Typically, they are houses that are less than 400 sq.ft. in size, although some can be as small as 80 sq.ft. They are designed to be functional and efficient, with innovative storage solutions and clever use of space.

Often, they are built on a foundation, but can also be constructed on wheels, allowing for greater flexibility and mobility. The mobility of tiny homes makes them a popular choice for those who value the ability to travel. It also makes it easier to find affordable land to park and build a tiny house on, as well as the ability to change locations if desired.

When it all began

In India, the tiny house movement started as early as 2010 when the economy started declining worldwide, the impact of which could be felt in the country. Millennials keen on saving money were the first to gravitate to the concept of 'compact living'. From there, several parts of India such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Hyderabad and Kerala introduced tiny homes, even as the average apartment size in the seven major Indian cities shrank by 17% between 2014 and 2018, according to a study by ANAROCK.

The price range for tiny homes in India varies depending on the location, size, and materials used. Generally, a basic tiny home can cost between ₹3 lakh and ₹10 lakh, while more luxurious and larger models can range from ₹15 lakh to ₹50 lakh. Most models accommodate water-conserving fixtures and a composting toilet. Some have solar panels and RV water heaters fitted in. Design features include big windows for extra light, sliding walls, and utility space under the stairs and loft beds.

One of the primary reasons people are choosing tiny homes is affordability. With skyrocketing housing prices in many areas, tiny homes offer a more accessible entry point to home ownership.

Sustainability is another major factor driving its popularity. With concerns over the environmental impact of large homes and the wastefulness of a consumerist lifestyle, people choose tiny homes as they are often built with sustainable materials and are designed to be energy-efficient, resulting in a smaller carbon footprint. Lime plaster in place of concrete, eco-friendly tiles instead of conventional tiles, bamboo for roofing and cladding purposes as well as interiors, and natural materials such as rice husk, banana leaves and coconut husk for insulation purposes are seen.

They are designed to be functional and efficient, with innovative storage solutions and clever use of space

Simplicity is another striking feature. With limited space, there is less room for clutter and unnecessary possessions. This can lead to a more intentional and mindful way of living.

Focus on minimalism

Minimalism is not just a trend in housing, it is also a design philosophy that has become increasingly popular in recent years. The focus is on creating spaces that are functional, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing, with an emphasis on simplicity and sustainability. This approach has led to the development of space-saving solutions, multi-functional furniture, and minimalist aesthetics.

Space-saving solutions are a key component of the minimalist housing design. This includes innovative storage solutions such as built-in shelves, cabinets, and drawers that maximise the use of vertical space. It also involves clever use of space, such as incorporating hidden rooms or convertible spaces that can serve multiple purposes.

Multi-functional furniture is another important aspect of minimalist design. This includes pieces that can serve more than one purpose, such as a sofa that can be transformed into a bed, or a coffee table that doubles as a desk. This type of furniture allows for greater flexibility and efficiency in small spaces.

Minimalist aesthetics are characterised by clean lines, simple shapes, and a focus on functionality. Neutral colours, such as white, grey, and black, are often used to create a sense of calm and serenity. This type of design can make a space feel larger and more open, even if it is relatively small.

Interior designer Arti Kapur says, "A space represents who you are, regardless of how big or small it is. Small spaces are a challenge to design, but that's the fun – how you can bring about life in limitations, in a simple yet elegant way."

Challenges

While tiny homes offer many benefits, there are also challenges to living in such a small building. One of the primary challenges is space constraints. With limited square footage, every inch must be carefully considered and utilised. This can be particularly challenging for those who are used to living in larger homes with more space.

Limited storage is another challenge. While space-saving solutions can help maximise storage, it can still be difficult to find room for all of one's possessions. This can require a significant downsizing of one's belongings, which can be difficult for those who are attached to their material possessions.

Living in a tiny home also requires significant lifestyle adjustments.

This includes adapting to a smaller living space, as well as potentially changing one's habits to make the most of the space available. For example, cooking in a tiny kitchen can require a more minimalist approach to meal preparation, while entertaining guests may require creative solutions to accommodate a large group in a small space.

The growing popularity of tiny homes is a testament to the appeal of minimalist, sustainable living. As housing prices continue to rise and the demand for affordable and efficient living spaces increases, tiny homes offer a practical solution.

Future scenario

Looking to the future, it is clear that the demand for sustainable, affordable housing will continue to grow. Tiny homes are well-positioned to cater to a particular segment of homebuyers. As the market expands, we can expect to see more innovations in design and construction.

The writer is Director, Eros Group.

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M BG-BGE

INBRIEF

Appointed JD(S) Bengaluru city unit president

The former MLC H.M. Ramesh Gowda was on Friday appointed president of the Janata Dal (Secular) Bengaluru city unit. A release said the appointment was made after the approval of party national president H.D. Deve Gowda and the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy. The appointment has been necessitated as the incumbent president R. Prakash has been nominated as the candidate for Govindarajanagar Assembly constituency.

Cong. attacks govt. citing SC observations on reservation

Stating that the BJP government led by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai stands exposed in the light of developments in the Supreme Court on changes to OBC reservation matrix, AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala on Friday said the Chief Minister should resign taking moral responsibility. He said the developments in the Supreme Court vindicated the Congress stand and "exposes the BJP's betrayal of Muslims, Vokkaligas, Lingayats, SCs, and STs".

The Supreme Court on Thursday orally told the State government that its order scrapping the 4% OBC quota for Muslims and dividing it between Vokkaliga and Lingayat castes in the State was based on "absolutely fallacious assumptions". Responding to this, Mr. Surjewala said, "We have repeatedly opposed the changes and what the Supreme Court said vindicates us. The Modi-Bommai double-engine government has betrayed the people of the State in the name of reservation and through a set of lies. The hike or changes in the reservation matrix has no legal or constitutional approval. The vote-bank politics through reservation has been curtailed."

HDK has his way as Bhavani relents; M.P. Kumaraswamy embraces JD(S)

My wife told me that she does not want to bring about a rift in the family: Revanna. Four senior Congress and BJP leaders join JD(S) on Friday

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bringing the curtains down on the family drama over the Hassan Assembly ticket that had turned into an embarrassment for the party, the Janata Dal (Secular) announced H.P. Swaroop as its candidate even as its former legislator Y.S.V. Datta figures in the second list of 50 candidates announced on Friday.

The party had announced candidates for 93 constituencies in November 2022, some of which could change in the hectic political developments taking place currently.

On Friday, disgruntled BJP legislator M.P. Kumaraswamy, who was denied ticket, was among the many who joined the party. Mr. Datta will replace C.M. Dhananjaya, whose name had been announced earlier.

The name of Mr. Swaroop, son of former legislator H.S. Prakash, was announced by former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy. He said Mr. Swaroop has been the unanimous choice and the entire family of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda would cooperate in his electioneering.

Unity on display: Janata Dal (S) leaders H.D. Kumaraswamy, H.D. Revanna, C.M. Ibrahim at a press conference in Bengaluru on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

With Revanna

Displaying family unity, the former Chief Minister had his elder brother Mr. Revanna with him while he announced the names of the other candidates. The decision on Hassan, which had remained a cliffhanger of sorts with Ms. Bhavani threatening to rebel, has been made by the party supremo Mr. Gowda. Both the brothers indicated that it was their father's decision.

Ms. Bhavani's interest in the Hassan seat had spilled over to the public as she and Mr. Kumaraswamy had exchanged barbs in public, embarrassing the party. The party also feared erosion of its voter base with a family tag attached. The JD(S) had won six out of seven seats in Hassan in 2018.

Gowda's health factor

"Health of Mr. Gowda is most important to us. Ms. Bhavani felt it strongly and she expressed her desire to give up the seat. Nobody can bring about a rift between the brothers," Mr. Revanna told presspersons. "My family nor I have never gone against Mr. Gowda's wish and I will listen to whatever he says," he added. "My wife told me that she did not want to drive a wedge in the family."

With the finalisation of the Hassan constituency, the party also released a list of candidates from the district. While former Minister A. Manju, who recently joined the party from BJP, was nominated to Arkalgudu, other incumbent legislators – Mr. Revanna (Holenarsipur), K.S. Lingesh (Belur), H.K. Kumaraswamy (Sakleshpur), and C.N. Balakrishna (Shravanabelagola) have been re-nominated.

Party-hoppers in list

Meanwhile, the second list features names of former BJP MLA Doddappagouda Patil from Jewargi and former BJP MLA Gurulingappagouda for Shahpur, who joined the party on Friday.

Among other new leaders, former Congress leaders Manohar Tahsildar and S.L. Ghotnekar have been named for Hangal and Haliyal, respectively. H.R. Chennakeshava, son of former Koppal MP H.G. Ramulu, has been fielded from Gangavati. Philanthropist Anand Chopra's son Saurabh Chopra has been named for Saundatti-Yellamma. In Sindagi where the party candidate Shivanand died, his wife Vishalakshi Shivanand has been named.

Some pending

Former Congress MLC Raghu Achar, who joined JD(S) on Friday, is yet to be named. He is likely to be given Chitradurga ticket. The party is likely to take a call on changing Arsikere candidate where former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyuappa's relative N.R. Santhosh has evinced interest. To accommodate Mr. M.P. Kumaraswamy, the party is likely to change the candidate at Mudigere too.

"More leaders are expected to join [the party] in the next couple of days," said Mr. Kumaraswamy.

Savadi's induction into Congress may be a mutually beneficial arrangement

Rishikesh Bahadur Desai
BELAGAVI

It seems the induction of Laxman Savadi, former Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader, into the Congress on Friday will be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

It is expected that he will get a chance to fight the Assembly polls from Athani. The Congress, in turn, hopes to benefit in constituencies in northwestern and northeastern Karnataka by the campaigns of Mr. Savadi, a Ganiga Lingayat leader.

Laxman Savadi being welcomed to the Congress in Bengaluru on Friday and (below) KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar being helped after he was almost thrown off balance during the event. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Jarkiholi factor

Importantly, the possible reorganisation of the Congress under Mr. Savadi in the northern Karnataka region may also help the party to reduce the overarching influence of Satish Jarkiholi and groom another senior leader, instead.

The 63-year-old leader, who has been displaced from the Athani constituency due to the defection of Mahesh Kumathalli from the Congress to the BJP, will get a foothold back in his home constituency.

When Mr. Savadi addressed a huge rally of his supporters at the ground of a Lingayat mutt in Athani, he said, "I am leaving because I have suffered humiliation in the BJP for a long. In a way, the BJP has thrown me out." His followers maintain that the development was brewing. "He took the decision to quit the ruling party after clear indications that Mr. Kumathalli would be renominated from Athani," said a BJP leader.

From a year ago

This began around a year ago when some BJP legislators cross-voted for the party, in favour of the JD (S). However, Mr. Savadi believes that the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah helped him win by asking Congress MLAs to refrain from voting. "It seems he began to think then that the BJP high command was not with him as much as he thought," said a BJP leader.

"Since the entry of Ramesh Jarkiholi and his follower Mr. Kumathalli to the political scene in Athani in 2019, the party organisation was divided into two distinct groups. The Jarkiholi brothers began running the party as a private organisation. Mr. Ramesh Jarkiholi's interference in Athani increased and he began appointing his loyalists to government and party offices in Athani. This angered Mr. Savadi's followers," said a member of the Athani City Municipal Corporation.

Some party workers loyal to Mr. Savadi said he was also worried about continuing his political legacy by assuring the political future of his children. "If the BJP were to continue Mr. Kumathalli for one or two terms, the Savadis had to let go of Athani completely. That is why he acted now," said a follower.

Congress leaders hope to milk the popularity of Mr. Savadi and his influence over the Ganiga Lingayt voters in northern Karnataka.

"His campaigns will help our candidates in at least a dozen constituencies between Belagavi and Kalaburagi," a Congress MLC said. "Farmers usually grow groundnut and other oil seeds in the black soil belt between the Malaprabha and the Bheema. There are 12 to 14 taluks in this region where Ganiga Lingayats, the traditional oil-extracting community, are concentrated. BJP candidates in these areas have benefited from Mr. Savadi's rallies here. Congress candidates will reap similar benefits now. Constituencies with higher concentration of Ganigas include Sindagi, Devara Hippargi, Babaleshwar, Kagwad, Jewargi, and Afzalpur," said the leader.

In coop. sector

Another factor that may work in favour of Mr. Savadi is his long association with cooperative societies in the State. "He has served as an office-bearer in the Apex Bank and the Belagavi district central cooperative bank. The village-level cooperative societies organise farmers at the grassroots. Leaders who work with cooperative institutions tend to have significant influence over village societies," said another Congress leader.

Banking on Modi

However, Mr. Kumathalli, BJP nominee from Athani, said Mr. Savadi's shift to the Congress would not affect the BJP much. "It is true that he has pockets of influence. But I am confident that voters will choose me because of my work for five years and the personality of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Mr. Kumathalli told *The Hindu*.

Urging people to vote

With a smile on their face: Artists of Rambo Circus creating awareness on voting, ahead of the Karnataka Assembly elections, in Bengaluru on Friday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Those quitting BJP now will not be taken back in near future: Arun Singh

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Close on the heels of a slew of disappointed ticket aspirants, including the former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi, quitting the party, BJP national general secretary in charge of Karnataka Arun Singh on Friday warned that the party would not open its doors in the near future to those who were quitting the party organistion now.

Arun Singh

'No loss to party'

"The party will not suffer any losses if five or six people tender their resignations. But we will not open our doors to them at least for the next 20 years," he warned, while addressing a press conference in Bengaluru.

Replying to a query on Mr. Savadi quitting the party and joining the Congress, Mr. Singh said the party had given him the Deputy Chief Minister's post despite him losing the Assembly polls. It had also made him an MLC. He should introspect in this regard, Mr. Singh said, and remarked that Mr. Savadi was bound to repent his decision to join the Congress.

He said lakhs of party workers had continued to render their services to the BJP despite not getting an opportunity to become either legislator or MP. "It is natural to become dissatisfied when they do not get the ticket to contest polls. But people and voters will not forget those who quit the party for selfish reasons despite enjoying high-level posts," he maintained.

More people leave

Meanwhile, disappointed ticket aspirants quitting the BJP continued with MLA for Ramdurg in Belagavi district Mahadevappa Yadavad, who has been denied the ticket, announcing his decision to quit the party. He told media persons on Friday that he had decided to contest as an Independent. He alleged that in his place the party had given the ticket to Chikkarevanna, who had come from the Congress.

Action sought against Ayanur

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

BJP Shivamogga district unit has recommended to party State president Nalin Kumar Kateel to take disciplinary action against Ayanur Manjunath, MLC, for allegedly violating the party discipline.

In a letter to Mr. Kateel, Shivamogga district unit president T.D. Megharaj said the Shivamogga city unit had written to him seeking action against Mr. Manjunath. In the letter received by him, Shivamogga city unit president Jagadish N.K. has accused Mr. Manjunath of putting up flex boards that insulted the party and its leaders. He had also blamed the BJP for the communal violence in Shivamogga, Mr. Jagadish said and took exception to Mr. Manjunath addressing a press conference to level such allegations and target party senior leaders.

Mr. Manjunath, who is an aspirant for the party ticket to contest from Shivamogga, had lashed out at MLA K.S. Eshwarappa, accusing him of indulging in nepotism.

High command suggested retirement, discloses KSE

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The former Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader K.S. Eshwarappa, who has announced retirement from electoral politics, on Friday disclosed that the party central leadership had made the suggestion regarding retirement to him.

"Our State election incharge Dharmendra Pradhan called me that morning and said we are feeling that it would be better if seniors like you and Jagadish Shettar desist from contesting the elections. Immediately, I told him that I am a disciplined soldier of the party and that I would send a letter in this regard to the central leadership in whatever format, the party wants. Later, party national organising general secretary B.L. Santhosh also called me in this regard. Accordingly, I sent the letter regarding the announcement on retirement from poll politics to party national president J.P. Nadda," Mr. Eshwarappa, who was in Ballari on a pilgrimage, told media persons.

K.S. Eshwarappa

He made it clear that the party had not discussed anything related to his son's aspiration to contest the elections this time.

"I have been following the party's directions all along my political career. I had given up my post in the Central Sericulture Board long ago when the party asked me to contest against the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in Parliamentary polls from Kanakapura. Similarly, I stepped down as Energy Minister to take over the mantle of party State president when the party leaders asked me to do so when the KJP had been floated," Mr. Eshwarappa recalled.

Referring to several disappointed ticket aspirants showing signs of becoming rebels, Mr. Eshwarappa said the party would try to pacify them. "We can understand their feelings. But they should not try to use the situation to blackmail. If that is the case, they are free to resign and go," he maintained. "If someone says that he is quitting because he did not get the party ticket, then he is unfit to become the party worker," he remarked.

Train arson: police intensify search for suspected accomplice

Kerala Police carry out an identification parade on Saifi, prime suspect in the case; take him to two spots in Shoranur to gather evidence

Mithosh Joseph
KOZHIKODE

Crucial visit: Shahrukh Saifi, suspect in the Kozhikode train arson case, being brought to the Shoranur station on Friday.

The Kerala Police have intensified search for a suspected accomplice of Shahrukh Saifi, prime suspect in the Kozhikode train arson case.

The police say a witness at an identification parade held on Saifi said the suspect wore a red shirt during the attack, which they claim supported investigators' findings that he changed clothes with the help of a shadowy accomplice after the crime.

A special team of the Kerala Police on Friday carried out an identification parade on Saifi at the police camp here and took him to Shoranur to gather more evidence.

Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) M.R. Ajithkumar, who is heading the special team, and Inspector General of Police (North Zone) Neeraj Kumar Gupta were present during the identification parade participated by key eye-witnesses.

Saifi allegedly set afire fellow passengers on the D1 coach of the Alappuzha-Kannur Executive Express after dousing them with petrol soon after the train left Elathur station near Kozhikode on April 2.

The incident resulted in three deaths as victims leaped from the train to escape the flames, while nine others suffered burns.

Evidence collection

Investigators took him to a fuel station on the Kulappully-Shoranur route from where he allegedly purchased petrol and the Shoranur station, where he boarded the train. Two employees at the fuel station identified him, and the police completed the evidence collection process in 30 minutes.

Saifi, 24, from Shaheen Bagh in Delhi, reportedly worked as a small-time carpenter in the neighbouring city of Noida, Uttar Pradesh. He had left Delhi on Kerala Sampark Kranti Express on March 31 and reached Shoranur before dawn on April 2.

The suspect's bag, containing garments, notepads, and a mobile phone, proved crucial in identifying him. The investigation had taken an unexpected twist when officers discovered a packet of home-cooked food in the bag.

While Saifi insisted the meal was from his home, the police remained sceptical, suspecting that it was provided by a local informant acquainted with him and his nefarious scheme.

Anti-terror squads

With the investigation progressing, sleuths have identified similarities between the Mangaluru and Coimbatore car blasts and the train arson incident.

A dedicated squad now collaborates with anti-terror squads from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, delving into the the suspect's potential involvement in crimes spanning their respective territories.

Remove ash beneath burnt plastic waste at Brahmapuram before end of May: NGT

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the Kerala State Pollution Control Board (PCB) to quantify the burnt and unburnt waste lying at the dump site of the Kochi Corporation at Brahmapuram following the massive fire on March 2.

The Southern Bench of the tribunal comprising of Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana, and expert member Dr. Satyagopal Korlapati directed the board to fix realistic timelines for biomining along with suggestions on how it can be expedited. The Bench issued the order after the regional office of the board in Ernakulam submitted a report stating that biomining should be completed before the onset of monsoon in June. "We fail to understand how the entire biomining can be completed in a short period of two months. The tribunal is concerned about the ensuing monsoon that would set in, in the first week of June, and once it starts, unless the ash beneath the burnt plastic or burnt legacy wastes is removed, will mix with rainwater and reach nearby water bodies," the Bench said.

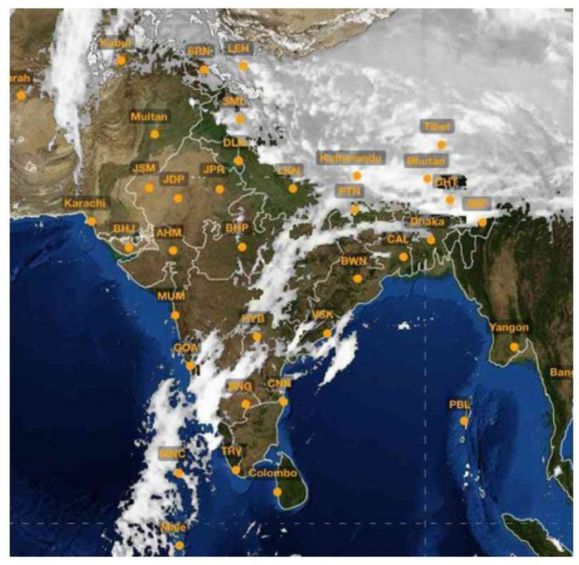
The Bench asked the board and the Kochi Corporation to join hands to initiate a scientific study at the earliest to segregate the burnt plastics/burnt waste and the ashes under it to avoid water pollution during monsoon and possible air pollution during segregation. The Department of Local Self-Government has to focus on this issue and give appropriate directions to the Corporation and the board. We reiterate that the entire exercise should be completed before the end of May, it said.

Tall leader

Flower shower: A helicopter showering petals on the 125-ft. bronze statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, inaugurated on Friday, coinciding with his birth anniversary. It was unveiled by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, in the presence of Dr. Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Ambedkar. G. RAMAKRISHNA

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty wind (30-40 kmph) likely at isolated places over Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Telangana and with lightning at isolated places over Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	39.3	24.8	Kozhikode	—	—	28.7
Ahmedabad	—	40.6	26.0	Kurnool	—	40.5	28.0
Aizawl	—	36.6	—	Lucknow	—	38.4	22.8
Allahabad	—	42.6	23.4	Madurai	—	—	24.4
Bengaluru	—	36.0	21.7	Mangaluru	—	33.9	26.1
Bhopal	—	39.1	24.9	Mumbai	—	33.0	26.0
Bhubaneswar	—	40.6	25.0	Mysuru	—	35.9	24.2
Chandigarh	—	37.7	20.1	New Delhi	—	39.1	20.6
Chennai	—	36.7	25.5	Patna	—	—	24.1
Coimbatore	—	38.7	24.5	Port Blair	—	34.4	25.6
Dehradun	—	36.3	18.5	Puducherry	—	—	24.7
Gangtok	—	23.2	15.0	Pune	—	—	21.6
Goa	—	33.4	26.6	Raipur	—	41.6	25.4
Guwahati	—	36.0	20.3	Ranchi	—	38.8	23.2
Hubballi	—	38.0	25.0	Shillong	—	28.3	17.4
Hyderabad	19.0	36.5	20.3	Shimla	—	24.5	14.6
Imphal	—	32.7	16.1	Srinagar	—	28.2	9.0
Jaipur	—	38.2	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.4	26.5
Kochi	—	33.6	28.4	Tiruchi	—	39.3	25.6
Kohima	—	26.6	15.0	Vijayawada	—	40.0	25.2
Kolkata	—	41.0	28.0	Visakhapatnam	—	34.2	28.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.04	.05	.02	55	122	
Bengaluru	.37	.26	.18	153	116	
Chennai	.02	.99	.95	126	100	
Delhi	.55	.18	.31	270	337	
Hyderabad	.24	—	.78	127	130	
Kolkata	—	.44	.29	173	170	
Lucknow	.69	.81	.32	261	166	
Mumbai	—	.54	.38	81	228	
Pune	110	157	115	101	81	
Visakhapatnam	.18	.47	.80	89	134	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Meghalaya recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 396 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 31

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

INBRIEF

Injunction against *Varaha Roopam* song in cinemas, OTT

The Kozhikode First Additional District Court has issued an interim injunction prohibiting the use of the song *Varaha Roopam* from the Kannada film *Kantara* in cinemas and OTT and digital streaming platforms, citing *prima facie* violation of the copyright Act. Judge K.E. Salih recently directed to give "due credit" to the music band *Thaikkudam Bridge* and Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Company Ltd, which holds the copyright of the *Navarasam* track that *Kantara* apparently infused in the song *Varaha Roopam*.

Four electrocuted during family function in A.P. village

In a tragic incident, four members of a family were electrocuted and three others were critically injured at a house-warming event at Kanugamakula Palle village in Annamayya district of Andhra Pradesh on Friday. The police said that the incident took place at a dining tent where a large number of guests had assembled to take lunch. All of a sudden, an iron pole used to erect the tent reportedly came in contact with an 11 KV overhead cable. The power in turn passed through the iron tables and metal vessels containing food. Four people were electrocuted.

Jumbo trouble: Kerala to move SC against HC directives

The State government will move the Supreme Court against the "impractical" directions issued by the Kerala High Court in translocating the wild elephant Arikompan. According to Forest Minister A.K. Saseendran, the State faces various practical difficulties in adhering to the stipulations fixed by the High Court order. The High Court had on Wednesday ordered the government to identify a suitable spot within a week, failing which the animal would have to be translocated to the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve.

Seeking ticket for Jagadish Shettar, 16 councillors tender resignation

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

On Friday, 16 councillors of the Hubballi Dharwad Municipal Corporation (HDMC) and 49 party office-bearers tendered their resignations, condemning the delay in announcing the ticket to the former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar.

It may be recalled that Mr. Shettar had openly conveyed his decision to contest the election after being asked by the high command to retire from politics. Subsequently, Mr. Shettar was called to New Delhi by BJP national president J.P. Nadda, who reportedly assured Mr. Shettar of reconsidering the party's decision. However, the party has not yet announced the candidate for Hubballi Dharwad Central constituency which Mr. Shettar has won six times.

Mr. Shettar has called a meeting of his loyalists at 11 a.m. on Saturday and says he will take a call on his next move after consultations

On Friday, 16 councillors, including Deputy Mayor of Hubballi-Dharwad Uma Mukund and former Mayor Viranna Savadi, sent their resignations to BJP State president Nalin Kumar Kateel in a bid to pressurise the party to announce the ticket to their leader immediately.

Along with them, 49 office-bearers, including State office-bearers of various morchas, sent their resignations to Mr. Kateel. Almost all the party-office bearers of the Hubballi Dharwad Central Assembly constituency and various wings of Hubballi-Dharwad Mahanagar Zilla unit are among those who tendered their resignations.

In their resignation letters, they have said that they were pained by the delay in announcing the ticket to Mr. Shettar.

In Kundagol, Dharwad district, the former MLA S.I. Chikkanagoudar has already announced that he would quit the BJP after being denied the ticket.

Meanwhile, in Gadag, MLA Ramanna Lamani is miffed over being denied the BJP ticket in Shirahatti constituency and the former MLA Sureshgouda Patil has expressed his dissent over the allotment of the ticket in Byadgi constituency.

Nehru Olekar, MLA, representing Haveri (SC), met the former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa in Bengaluru on Friday but indications are that he would go ahead with decision of quitting the party.

Mr. Shettar has called a meeting of his loyalists at 11 a.m. on Saturday and said he would take a call on his next move after consultations

Tension prevails on GITAM campus in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

Tension prevailed at GITAM Deemed to be University campus in Visakhapatnam, as a large number of police and revenue officials were mobilised at the surroundings during the early hours of Friday.

The officials have started to fence the area, which was allegedly grabbed by the university. Vehicle movement was restricted to some parts of Rushikonda, especially near the college premises, anticipating trouble. The entire region was brought under police security.

Between the GITAM campus and Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, the GITAM management has allegedly constructed a large drain and a road for easy movement of vehicles. The Revenue Department has marked the land and started to fence. As per the revenue officials, the area belongs to the government. The total extent of the area is yet to be known and no demolitions were made.

This is not the first time the revenue officials have gone to the campus for taking back government land. On January 6 this year, some part of land near GIMSR campus was taken back. During October 2020, some unauthorised constructions on the campus were demolished by the revenue officials.

Six killed in accident in Kodagu district

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Six persons, including three children and two women, were killed in an accident involving a car and a KSRTC bus at Sampaje, close to Kodagu-Dakshina Kannada border, on Friday.

The accident occurred when the car with eight persons, including three children, which was going towards Mangaluru collided with the oncoming bus which was headed towards Virajpet. The accident is believed to have occurred around 1 p.m.

The impact was such that the car was reduced to a mass of mangled metal and the six persons are suspected to have died on the spot. The condition of two others is said to be serious, according to Madikeri Rural police. The identity of the victims is being ascertained and they are originally from Malavalli in Mandya.

The car which became a mass of mangled metal after colliding with a bus at Sampaje, near Sullia, on Friday.

Wayanad farmer sets up bambusetum model that keeps desertification at bay

E.M. Manoj
KALPETTA

Desertification is a serious threat being faced by residents along the Kerala-Karnataka boundary of Wayanad district, especially in villages on the northeastern tip of the Deccan Plateau, after the massive destruction of bamboo groves.

However, a progressive farmer has developed a sustainable mode of mitigation with the support of the Soil Conservation Department. Bhaskaran has set the bambusetum model on 3.5 acres of land near Pulpally by planting selected species of bamboo.

As many as 1,400 saplings of bamboo were planted on the marshy land five years ago with the financial support of the Soil Conservation Department, said Mr. Bhaskaran. The maintenance and management cost was negligible, he added. Making channels and water outlets to drain out excess water was the activity to be taken care of in every garden, without which the seedlings would be damaged, he said.

Bhaskaran on his five-year-old bambusetum at Pulpally in Wayanad district.

The model was a live example of conserving water, soil resources, and biodiversity, said P.U. Das, former district soil conservation officer. The moisture content of the soil was rich, the water retention capacity of the soil had increased and the organic carbon in the soil had doubled, he added.

The biodiversity, especially the bird diversity in the bambusetum, has considerably improved. He said that 20 different types of birds could be observed in the garden, and many of them had built nests there.

Four drown in Ghataprabha

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Four youth from Uttara Kannada drowned in the Ghataprabha near Dhoopadal in Belagavi district on Friday.

Santosh Babu, Ajay Babu and Krishna Babu Jore, all 19, and Anand Vithu Kokade, 20, drowned while swimming in the river near Dhoopadal.

Their friends, Vithal Janu Kokade and Ramachandra Kokade, who suffered some breathlessness under water, are being treated at Karnataka Health Institute Hospital.The group travelled from Shirageri near Mundgod for a picnic on the banks of the river.

The police said that they were caught unawares in the strong currents. A case has been registered.

Optical relief

For most households, the moderation in headline inflation brings little respite

The pace of price rise faced by Indian consumers eased below the central bank's upper tolerance threshold of 6% in March. The 5.66% retail inflation level recorded in March was last seen in December 2021. That was followed by a sustained spell of high inflation that escalated after the Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in February 2022, and peaked at an eight-year high of 7.8% in April. Including last November and December, March marks only the third occasion in 15 months when inflation was within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) mandated tolerance range of 2% to 6%. The RBI, which had to send an explanation to the government on why the target was missed for three successive quarters – for the first time since the inflation targeting framework was introduced – hit a pause on interest rates this month after a streak of hikes. It now expects inflation to average 5.2% in 2023-24 (lower than the 5.3% it projected in February). As it stands, the average inflation between January and March has turned out to be 6.21%, far higher than the RBI's February projection of 5.9%. For the full year gone by, inflation averaged 6.66% *vis-à-vis* 6.5% the RBI expected.

The central bank and the government may now be sanguine about headline inflation staying below 6%, but that is in no small measure due to the statistical effects of higher numbers from the previous year's base. In the April to June quarter, the RBI expects inflation to average 5.1%, up from 5% predicted two months ago – the same quarter had clocked a mean inflation of 7.28% in 2022. While the pace of price rise may slow down, prices are still rising at a fairly significant clip, on top of price hikes effected in the past year. There is no medium-term reversal likely in amounts people shell out for most goods and services, barring seasonally triggered changes in items such as vegetables. In fact, excluding vegetables whose prices have been falling year-on-year since November 2022, the inflation faced by consumers in March was still 6.6%. Imported inflation fell to its lowest level since November 2019 at 2.8%, which means domestic factors are still spurring prices around 6%. Fresh global shocks from oil prices and other unknowns may cause imported inflation to spike again. With cereal, spices and milk prices on the boil and worries about crop losses due to recent unseasonal precipitation (as well as fears of El Niño effects this year), food prices may continue to pinch households. There is no room to let the guard down on inflation, even if propping up growth is the priority. Squeezed consumption is hardly going to inspire investment.

Myriad woes

The only solution for Myanmar's troubles is the restoration of democracy

Myanmar's military did it again. On Tuesday, the junta, notorious for its attacks on civilians, carried out air strikes on an opposition gathering in the rebel-held Sagaing region, killing over 100, including women and children. The National Unity Government (NUG), the parallel administration formed by opposition groups, as well as witnesses, said a fighter jet and a combat helicopter bombed the gathering, which was celebrating the opening of an administrative office of the NUG; the regime, led by Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, calls it a "terrorist entity". The junta later confirmed the strike, but said most of those killed were resistance fighters. The strikes actually show the junta's growing vulnerabilities rather than strength in the country's ongoing civil war. In the past, the main opposition that the military regimes had faced was the non-violent democratic movement led by Aung San Suu Kyi. But after the February 2021 coup, which toppled an increasingly popular Ms. Suu Kyi (her National League for Democracy had won back-to-back elections), the country slipped into a civil war between the regime and the NUG. The NUG and its armed wing, the People's Defence Force (PDF), have joined hands with ethnic militias to oust the military. The military has lost swathes of territories, mostly sparsely populated rural and jungle areas. Unable to recapture lost land, it has relied on air strikes to weaken the opposition.

The junta faces pressure from the resistance groups, but it still controls most of the country's population centres. The current approach of the generals is to hold on to territories under their control while continuing to use disproportionate force against opposition fighters and civilians in rebel-held areas. With the tacit support of Russia and China and silence from India, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing does not face any regional pressure either. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had earlier proposed a five-point peace plan, urging an end to hostilities and starting inclusive dialogue. But the generals have refused to talk to the opposition and are not ready to share power. The status quo, however, is unsustainable. Regional powers cannot look away when a thuggish regime keeps killing its people with impunity. A peaceful resolution in Myanmar is essential for the stability of Southeast Asia, and, hence, ASEAN and regional powers such as Russia, China and India should not see the civil strife as an internal problem of Myanmar. They should use their economic and political clout to force the generals to stop the violence and enter into talks with the opposition. The only sustainable, long-term and just solution for Myanmar's myriad woes is the restoration of its democracy under a federal constitutional order. The first step to achieve this goal is to end the violence.

A reminder about unfettered constitutional posts

Anupam Kulshreshtha

is a former Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General of India, and teaches law at the Institute of Management Technology (IMT), Ghaziabad, Delhi NCR

Two recent comments of the Supreme Court of India will have direct bearing on the concept of the independence of various constitutional authorities in India. In a hearing of the 'Sena versus Sena' case, the Court expressed its "serious concern" over the active role being played by Governors in State politics, observing that Governors becoming part of political processes is disconcerting. And, earlier, taking an important step in ensuring independence of the Election Commission of India, the Court divested the executive of its sole discretion in appointing the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) by forming a committee to suggest suitable names to man these constitutional posts.

Need for independent institutions

A democracy requires a system of checks and balances to prevent the arbitrary use of power by the elected government of the day. India's democracy provides for various constitutional authorities such as the Public Service Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), the ECI, the Finance Commission and the National Commissions for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Backward Classes (BC), etc. The Constituent Assembly of India had recognised the need for such independent institutions to regulate sectors of national importance without any executive interference. It is necessary that such constitutional bodies are provided with complete independence to enable them to function without fear or favour and in the larger interests of the nation. It is towards this concept of clothing them with independence that the Constitution provides for the manner in which individuals heading these institutions are to be appointed.

An essential attribute of independence is about not being influenced by any vested interest and the ability to withstand pressure from the executive. While empowering the President of India to appoint all constitutional authorities, the Constitution-makers had kept in mind those institutions whose independence is of paramount importance to the country and the manner in which the independence of these authorities could be safeguarded from the whims of the executive. A study of various provisions in the Constitution regarding India's constitutional authorities is revealing.

The Constitution-makers have used simple words such as 'shall be appointed by the President' in the appointment of the Prime Minister (Article 75), the Attorney-General for India (Article 76), the Chairman and other members of the Finance Commission (Article 280), the Chairman and other members of the Public Service Commission (Article 316) and a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities (Article 350B). Article 324 provides that the President will appoint the CEC and ECs 'subject to any law made in that behalf by Parliament'.

> There should not be any dilution of the essential attribute of the independence of India's constitutional bodies, as a study of various provisions in the Constitution shows

However, the words 'shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal' are used while authorising the President for appointment of the judges of Supreme Court and the High Court (Articles 124 and 217), the CAG (Article 148) and for appointment of the Governor (Article 155). Similar words have been used in Articles 338, 338A and 338B authorising the President for appointing Chairman and members of the National Commissions for SCs, STs and BCs. However, the original Article, Article 338, had stated that 'there shall be a Special Officer for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be appointed by the President'.

The Supreme Court has held, in *N. Gopalaswami and Ors vs The Union of India*) that the President acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, with the Prime Minister as the head in all matters which vests in the executive. However, in cases where the appointment of a particular constitutional authority is to be kept independent of the executive, the question arises whether such an interpretation would be in line with the thinking which prevailed during the relevant Constituent Assembly debates.

'Unrestricted and unfettered' choice

In the draft Constitution, the article for appointment of the CAG (Article 124) had provided that 'There shall be an Auditor General who shall be appointed by the President ....' While moving an amendment to this Article "That in clause (1) of Article 124 after the word 'Present' ['President'] the words 'by warrant under his hand and seal' be inserted", the Constituent Assembly had discussed that "the Auditor-General, like the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, is to be appointed by the President and therefore it is essential that the words 'by warrant under his hand and seal' should be introduced". The Constituent Assembly further discussed that 'The Auditor-General should be always independent of either the legislature or the executive. He is the watch-dog of our finances, his position must be made so strong that he cannot be influenced by anyone, howsoever great he may be. From that point of view I am very glad that certain amendments have been moved whereby the position of the Auditor-General has been made very strong.'

On the same day, while initiating the amendment for the Article providing for a Governor (Article 131 of the draft Constitution) it was moved to substitute the following that: 'The Governor of a State shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal'. The Constituent Assembly discussed the following: "To say that the President may nominate from a panel of names really means restricting the choice of President. It gives power into the hands of the Legislature. It is necessary, Sir, that the President should be free from the influence of the Legislature... So I say the choice of the President should be unrestricted and unfettered...."

Both amendments were passed.

For appointments to be made by the President (Articles 75, 76, 280(2), 316 and 324(2)), the Constitution provides for certain conditions to be fulfilled by those who may be considered for such appointments. In these articles, the words used are - 'To be appointed by the President', and as such the President must act on the advice of the Prime Minister after ensuring that the requisite qualifications are fulfilled.

A special status

It is pertinent to keep in mind that the Constitution affixes the phrase "by warrant under his hand and seal" only to refer to appointment to positions (Judges, the CAG and the Governors) where it assigns a special status to distinguish them from other constitutional positions.

Constitutional authorities such as the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court and the CAG of India are to be kept free from political or executive pressure. Whereas appointment of judges and the ECs have been made free from the influence of the executive, the need to set up a well-defined criteria and procedure for the appointment of the CAG of India remains keeping in view the intention of the framers of the Constitution, as evident from the Constituent Assembly debates.

The process of selecting a person to be appointed as the CAG of India should begin by appointing a committee consisting of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Chief Justice of India, and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to shortlist names to be considered for appointment as the CAG of India; and a panel of three names should be forwarded to the President for him to make the final selection as in Article 148 of the Constitution of India.

The 'fact check' is that Indians will have little choice

Tanmay Singh

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Gayatri Malhotra

is an Associate Litigation Counsel at the Internet Freedom Foundation

George Orwell's iconic novel *1984* introduces readers to Oceania, a tyrannical state with a state-mandated language, Newspeak. As described by Syme, a lexologist at the Ministry of Truth, citizens are prevented from "thoughtcrimes" when "every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten".

This dystopian fiction is providing inspiration to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) which has created powers to determine "fake or false or misleading" Internet content about "any business of the Central Government". Intermediaries such as social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) and Internet service providers (Airtel and BSNL), will have to censor (on orders from the government) reports about the government. The reasoning behind these changes, as in the press note, is for a "Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable Internet". But is this claim Newspeak?

The first claim for an "open" Internet may be examined by having a closer look at clause 3(i)(II)(C) of the IT Amendment Rules, 2023, which contain these powers that were notified on April 6, 2023. The determination of "fake or false or misleading" information about the central government will be by a "fact check unit of the Central Government". Hence, it will be acting as a judge in its own case.

No safeguards

Natural justice requires a transparent process, where a person is provided a fair chance of a hearing and given a legal order. No such safeguard exists in the IT Rules, which could result in a black box of government censorship. At best, press releases and tweets by the government will rally citizens to its cause without providing legal reasoning or the remedy of a legal challenge. Further, some aggregate numbers will be provided in response to parliamentary questions. This may become the new definition of "open".

> The amendments to the IT Rules, for an 'open, safe, trusted and accountable Internet', is case of a judge acting in his own case

Coming to the claim of keeping Indians "safe", the rules are for the benefit of "any business of the Central Government". Reasonably, one could admit that false information about the central government may result, at times, in public injury, but it is undeniable that the direct beneficiary is the central government itself. How may this be exercised?

Precedent exists of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) Fact Checking department itself committing errors for journalistic reporting that is critical of public departments even when this was based on official documents. With the new powers, such a determination by a fact check unit will result in a swift take down, making it inaccessible not only on social media but also on the website of the news portal. Hence, it will prevent readers from developing a critical understanding through a contestation of facts, that is a natural outcome of a democratic system. As Justice Mathew observed in *State Of U.P. vs Raj Narain* (1975), "...but the executive is not the organ solely responsible for public interest. It represents only an important element in it; but there are other elements. One such element is the administration of justice. The claim of the executive to have exclusive and conclusive power to determine what is in public interest is a claim based on the assumption that the executive alone knows what is best for the citizen". As in the IT Rules, the central government exclusively knows what is best to keep us safe.

There are no details

To make a "trusted" Internet, such fact checking comes without any details on the composition of the "fact checking body". This is important as the design of regulatory institutions, when not insulated, or formed with financial and functional autonomy, makes them subservient to government and even political interests. This undermines the very basis of how trust in government is built through scrutiny, given that the executive branch enjoys immense powers of the sword and the purse. This has been explained by the Supreme Court in *R. Rajagopal vs State Of T.N.* (1994) as, "Our system of Government demands... constant vigilance over exercise of governmental power by the press and the media among others. It is essential for a good Government."

However, under the present system, the Union Government will become the sole arbiter of truth; and when it says trust us, Indians will have little choice.

The basis of accountability

Finally, the very basis of "accountability" lies in remedial actions that are implemented. This means neither an artificial measure of placation to demonstrate action nor a disproportionate or aggressive penalty. Quite often, when set in its proper context, "accountability" as a phrase is used to correct government and large corporations. How will the IT Rules achieve it when they will target the very institutions that work towards it?

The very mission for journalists is to report facts and speak truth to power. This leaves us to wonder what the slogan "Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable Internet" means in a Digital India.

Some clues may be provided by the rules of Newspeak which banned the use of the word 'free', allowing it to "only be used in such statements as 'This dog is free from lice' or 'This field is free from weeds'."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opposition unity

The Editorial, "Unity in diversity" (April 14), reminded me of my school days, in the 1950s, when many a teacher talked about the Malayalam equivalent of the said phrase, *naanathwathil ekathwam*, as a great quality of our country which had just won Independence. In a way, we were freed from the exploitation, by the then rulers, of our diverse geography, history, politics, cultures, religions and languages. After 75 years of democracy, the advice to Opposition parties 'to recognise their differences and come together' appears irrelevant. It only urges the Opposition parties to 'unite' against the 'BJP, whose hunger for power is infinite'. Most parties have no ideology as such. 'Common minimum programmes' have often failed. The only common ground is a 'thirst for power', which corrupts. Parties should strive for ideologies to serve the common people. Unfortunately, personal and family concerns are the prime considerations for most regional parties and some national parties.

P.R.V. Raja,
Pandalam, Kerala

Revisions to history

The purging of India's past in the name of syllabus revision is a low. In Pakistan, virtually nothing about the Indian freedom movement is taught. Is there a competition with Pakistan?

The dire need of our times is to make our textbooks more inclusive by incorporating life-experiences of the subaltern sections who had been thrown into the periphery and forced to remain there for centuries. Instead, what we witness is a purging of historical truths that are unpalatable to the ruling establishment. It seems this is the time India needs its greatest son Jawaharlal Nehru's thoughts against exclusiveness more direly than ever. One has to read *The Discovery of India* to understand this.

Sukumaran C.V.,
Palakkad, Kerala

Closing liquor shops

The decision by the Tamil Nadu government to close down 500 shops run by the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited this year, in a move to have a liquor-free Tamil Nadu, may have limitations. Closure is no panacea. The root causes of liquor use/drinking such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and stress need to be countered . A multi-pronged approach that includes increased expenditure on the social sectors, sensitisation programmes by roping in doctors and psychiatrists in hot spots, expanding skill development training for local conditions, and a strong political will are what will be the game-changer in the fight against liquor consumption.

R. Srivatsan,
Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Students of the Kalakshetra Foundation protest against sexual harassment by a faculty member, in Chennai. M. KARUNAKARAN

Kalakshetra's summer of discontent

Charges of sexual harassment have threatened to upend the equilibrium at this prestigious haven of the fine arts. **Deepa H. Ramakrishnan** spoke to students, alumni and administrators to map the current crisis and the growing pressure for wider reform

A small revolution has been making itself felt on the sylvan campus of the Kalakshetra Foundation, an institution of the arts in Chennai. For an institution such as this one steeped in the *guru-shishya* tradition and held in high regard, the revolt within has sent ripples of shock in the wider community. The charges that have been made are of a very serious nature: sexual harassment, verbal abuse, body-shaming.

On March 30, a group of around 250 students who attended the usual morning prayer under the banyan tree did not sit for their examinations scheduled that day. They began an indefinite strike inside the campus, demanding the removal of four staff members, including an assistant professor, of the Rukmini Devi College of Fine Arts under the Kalakshetra Foundation. Media reports had already been rife with stories of complaints of sexual harassment.

The students, many of whom joined the institution after finishing Class 12, had formed a core committee (for the first time in the college), and were protesting against instances of sexual harassment, verbal abuse and body-shaming by the four staff members. They refused to relent, despite entreaties by the college authorities, and take their examinations. They were backed by a group of teachers who stood by them.

The Foundation established by Rukmini Devi Arundale in 1936 with the vision "of imparting to the young the true spirit of art, devoid of vulgarity and commercialism" is set on a campus spread over 100 acres. Today, it is a vital centre for the study and performance of fine arts and is an autonomous body functioning under the Ministry of Culture. With the Kalakshetra Foundation Act of 1993, it is listed as an institution of national importance.

The students, headed by seniors in the fourth year, did not stop their protests till the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women went to their campus and heard their grievances on March 31, the day after the protests began. "The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), headed by director Revathi Ramachandran, was an eye wash," said a student. The committee hearing was held after the allegations surfaced in December 2022. "The committee described the allegations as mostly manufactured and aimed at maligning Kalakshetra's reputation. The Foundation had also issued a gag order preventing students and staff from discussing the events from December 2022. A day after students opened up before the committee, whatever they had shared with the members was out in the open. Secrecy was not maintained."

Charges and more

Soon after the protest was launched, it emerged that the charges of sexual harassment were made against an assistant professor, Hari Padman, a Bharatanatyam exponent. Meanwhile, the institution said that the ICC did not have a written complaint from anyone, so action could not be taken. The issue had caused a stir in the institution in the past.

> The committee described the allegations as mostly manufactured and aimed at maligning Kalakshetra's reputation. The Foundation also had issued a gag order preventing students and staff from discussing the events from December 2022
>
> **A STUDENT**
> Rukmini Devi College of Fine Arts

In a social media post that she subsequently deleted, former director Leela Samson wrote about irregularities in the college, alleging that Padman was having an affair with a student. Shortly thereafter, a former student, who said she had been harassed by Padman, sent letters to the Ministry of Culture and other officials. Samson also hinted at the involvement of three repertory artistes in harassing students.

Immediately after the protests were launched by the students, the National Commission for Women (NCW) took *suo motu* cognisance of the matter and directed the Director-General of Police to register an FIR and proceed with criminal action against the professor. Subsequently, a team from the NCW visited the campus and heard the grievances of students in the first year, one by one, and later of those in their second year. Finally, all students of the final year were called *en masse*. "They looked at each other and were hesitant to disclose their grievances openly. The hearing was conducted in a hurried manner and without the proper atmosphere for the student to speak out," said a police officer. Subsequently, the NCW closed the case, indicating this in a communique sent to the Director-General of Police.

Simmering discontent

Students have been voicing discontent over the governing ethos of Kalakshetra for several years now. The current spell of restiveness goes back to the monsoon season of 2022 when many fell sick due to water contamination in the hostel. "We were sick, with vomiting and diarrhoea. They gave us some medicines or took us to some local doctor. But then, we are not even allowed to go home if a relative dies. They don't believe us and ask for proof. Hostel students are not allowed to go out for more than three hours on two Saturdays," explained a student. Matters escalated with complaints of sexual harassment, particularly after Padman was honoured as part of Women's Day by the institution, students said.

State Commission for Women (SCW) chairperson A.S. Kumari also visited the campus and received complaints from around 100 students, including male students. She said that after the interaction with students, it emerged that instances of sexual harassment on the campus could be traced back to 2018: "Around 12 girl students from Hyderabad gave their statements through WhatsApp video calls to us. All of them have been compiled and forwarded to the State government for immediate action. Most of them are about sexual harassment, emotional blackmail and verbal abuse."

Hari Padman (face covered) being produced at the Saidapet Court in Chennai. M. KARUNAKARAN

> We received information that the students who gave complaints were intimidated by the management and asked to withdraw the complaints. The government should take legal action against the management after conducting an inquiry
>
> **A. RADHIKA**
> General secretary, AIDWA's Tamil Nadu unit

The SCW recommended to the State government and Director-General of Police that suitable action be taken against the Kalakshetra Foundation following complaints from students of sexual harassment. It found several lacunae in the institution's handling of these complaints. At one point, one person in the administration even randomly questioned students about whether they had faced sexual harassment or molestation.

It asked the Foundation to constitute a Grievance Redressal Committee to ensure a safe atmosphere for the students and also asked for details about dropouts, and their reasons for dropping out. The SCW also directed the Foundation to produce details of the complaints taken up by ICC so far, and the action taken.

Police action

M.R. Sibi Chakravarthi, Joint Commissioner of Police, who came to the campus on the first day of the protests, said, "Initially nobody came forward to lodge a police complaint. Finally, a former woman student came forward with a complaint against Padman. Then we registered a case before proceeding further."

The Adyar All Women Police Station registered a case on March 31, following a complaint by a student who studied at the college between 2015 and 2019 and discontinued her studies due to harassment. Padman was booked under section 354A (sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code and provisions of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women Act. Chakravarthi said, "We have recorded the evidence of six students from Kerala to corroborate the sexual harassment charges and felt there was enough evidence to proceed further to arrest the suspect."

The police claimed that Padman went into hiding after his return from Hyderabad, where he had gone for a performance, but they zeroed in on his location in Chennai and arrested him two days after the FIR was filed, on April 3. The IX Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Saidapet court complex dismissed his bail plea on April 11.

Meanwhile, a section of students and teachers spoke up for Padman, alleging that some members in the college were unfairly targeting him, and that the accusations were driven by jealousy and trumped up. His wife spoke of "inconsistencies" between the charges and the complainant's own actions.

The three other staff members, repertory artistes Sanjith Lal, Sai Krishnan and Sreenath, had been let go after a meeting of the Governing Board of Kalakshetra, which had also placed Padman under suspension. These three were alumni of the institute and were working on contract. The Repertory, which is the performance wing of Kalakshetra, comprises staff, students and guest artistes from among alumni. Students who learnt directly from Rukmini Devi are invited to help and teach the present students. The Board also announced a three-member independent inquiry committee, with Justice (Retd) K. Kannan, former Tamil Nadu DGP Letika Saran and Shobha Varthaman, to look into the allegations. The ICC was reconstituted.

For its part, the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) took *suo motu* cognisance based on a news item dated March 31, 2023 in *The Hindu*. Two teams from the Commission visited Kalakshetra and interacted with the management and the students.

All this has taken place amid suspicion of intimidation, said activists of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), the Students Federation of India and the Democratic Youth Federation of India. They alleged that some staff members were forcing students who had agitated not to proceed further with their complaints.

A. Radhika, general secretary of the AIDWA's Tamil Nadu unit, said, "We received information that the students who gave complaints were intimidated by the management and asked to withdraw the complaints. The government should take legal action against the management after conducting an inquiry. We also demand that the Union Ministry of Culture intervene in this issue."

Former Kalakshetra students are worried about the lasting damage to the Kalakshetra ethos with the polarisation between students and teachers. "The administrative team should not have let things get to such a situation," said one of them, echoing the others. "They, especially the director, seem to have lost the confidence of the students. The staff needs to work towards instilling confidence among the students. Their well-being and development must come first." The students had also demanded the resignation of the director, whose tenure ends soon.

Discrimination and favouritism?

Charges of favouritism have been flying fast and furious, with other complaints bubbling up. Some students alleged that they faced discrimination because of language and caste. A former teacher at Kalakshetra countered: "Dance is an art form where teachers cannot use a chalk and board to get across what they have in their mind. The teacher has to communicate to the students what is on his or her mind. When students learn dance, they should know their capabilities. If they want a certain part, they must be physically and mentally prepared for that. Otherwise, they cannot be chosen. When a production is taken up, participants are chosen based on their capabilities. Not on the basis of their language or caste. Here, the institution comes first since the artistes represent Kalakshetra."

Dancer Anita Rathnam recalls entering Kalakshetra as a postgraduate: "It was a time when Rukmini Devi Arundale was still heading it. I made most of my best friends there. Our teachers were strict but they ensured that we learnt to dance well and in due course, they too became our friends. We were a very diverse group, we had Tamil-speaking students from Malaysia and Sri Lanka and also students from Russia and Japan. But there never has been a caste or communal divide in Kalakshetra. This was the pluralistic vision of the founder. Kalakshetra was envisioned as a cultural Auroville where voices and [thoughts] blew in from everywhere."

Calls for course-correction

The events of the past few weeks and the manner in which students and the institution have faced up to each other hint at a generation gap, and a changing profile of the student community. There is great pressure on Kalakshetra to undertake a deep appraisal of its systems, and set its house in order. There are also calls for reforms in the education system. After four-six years of studies, students leave only with diplomas, and their career prospects are essentially limited to performing and teaching dance. Perhaps the institution needs to include other subjects – such as history and art perspectives – and accord degrees that are recognised by universities so that alumni can pursue other courses of study.

"Kalakshetra needs to understand that it is dealing with students who were born in a different society than what existed some 30-40 years ago. More freedom for students would be a good starting point," a Bharatanatyam dancer said. Another academician pointed out that the institute is led by great dancers who may not necessarily be good administrators. But first, on the issue at hand, P.T. Narendran, a member of the Governing Board of the Kalakshetra Foundation, said that the institute was awaiting the outcome of the investigation by the police. "We hear that students are afraid whether they would be taken back. They need not be afraid," he added. "We are there for the students. They should understand that they need not fear anything. We only want them to be honest and truthful," he said.

A tough test awaits the Foundation in the summer months ahead.

(With inputs from R. Sivaraman)

From Page One

Northeast gets its first AIIMS, slew of projects

Mr. Modi illustrated this by giving the example of the AIIMS Delhi, which was established in the 1950s. He said no effort had been taken to open another one elsewhere in the country until Atal Bihari Vajpayee took the initiative as the Prime Minister.

Mr. Modi said since 2014, the BJP-led government started work on 15 AIIMS with treatment and courses having begun in most of them. "The AIIMS Guwahati is an example of the fact that our government fulfils all the resolutions," he added.

He said his government was modernising India's health sector according to the needs of the 21st century, insisting that the ongoing schemes have greatly benefited the health of women.

Mr. Modi said efforts to enhance connectivity in the Northeast are reflected in the improvement in the road, rail, and airport infrastructure in the last nine years. "Along with physical infrastructure, social infrastructure also received a massive boost in the region as education and health facilities have been expanded in an unprecedented manner," he said, attributing the change to the government's service-oriented approach.

Ayushman Bharat cards distributed

The Prime Minister also launched the Aapke Dwar Ayushman campaign by distributing Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana cards to 1.1 crore eligible beneficiaries.

The Prime Minister's programme was in presence of Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Health Minister Mansukh L. Mandaviya and his Assam counterpart Keshab Mahanta.

Congress leaders offer Pilot 'bigger party role'

The offer includes giving Mr. Pilot a key role in the screening committee for the Rajasthan election, allowing him a say in the candidate-selection process. But Mr. Pilot insisted on a leadership change, which he reminded was promised to him based on the work he did as State president before the 2018 elections.

Mr. Pilot on the other hand, sources said, complained about the "obvious partisan" role played by Rajasthan in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, citing the stern warning issued to him on the eve of his day-long fast. He argued that at a time when the Congress is highlighting corruption charges against the BJP government at Centre and States, his demand for probe into cases against the Vasundhara Raje government cannot be deemed "anti-party". And the warning came even before his hunger strike, where he said, he did not make any remarks against the party or Gehlot government.

Warning

He also pointed that while the party acted with alacrity to warn him, a similar speed was not displayed in case of showcause notices issued to three Rajasthan leaders for organising a parallel meeting of Congress Legislative Party on September 25 directly challenging the Delhi leadership's diktat. After the meeting, it is learnt that Mr. Randhawa was pulled up for being trigger-happy.

With both sides maintaining their stance the meeting didn't have a concrete result.

Drones to deliver drugs to Char Dham pilgrims

Previously, drones have been successfully used to transport COVID-19 vaccines in the north eastern part of the country. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences at Rishikesh has also started a drone service to deliver and pick up medicines.

"These measures will be supported with citizen-friendly communication and awareness activities such as websites or portals to inform pilgrims of weather conditions, importance of acclimatisation, location of health facilities on the way, call centre numbers, pre-yatra screening, emergency support numbers, etc," said the Health Ministry.

Locked Jamia Masjid sparks anger in Kashmir Valley

Residents, regional parties criticise the decision of the administration to disallow congregational prayers at the historic mosque in Jammu and Kashmir on the last Friday of the month of Ramzan

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday disallowed congregational noon prayers on the occasion of Jummat-ul-Vida at the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar. The move attracted protests from locals and criticism from the regional parties, including the National Conference (NC), the J&K Apni Party and the Hurriyat.

No entry: The Jamia Masjid in Srinagar is seen through a locked gate on the last Friday of Ramzan. AP

Worshippers alleged that they were evicted early in the morning. Several shopkeepers said they were asked to close their shops and move out of the mosque premises in the Nowhatta area of Srinagar. "We have been peacefully praying in the mosque this Ramzan, seeking forgiveness and an end to the crisis Kashmir is in. Our sentiments are hurt by such moves. We are pained by the government's move," a worshipper said.

Several women alleged that the security forces did not allow them to enter the mosque premises. Additional security personnel were deployed in and around the mosque. The gates were also locked. The J&K police did not issue any statement over the move to close the mosque.

The caretakers of the mosque said they were expecting over one lakh devotees to offer congregational prayers as per the practice on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramzan.

'Arbitrary restriction'

"A large number of people visited Jamia Masjid to offer Friday prayers for the first three Fridays of the holy month. Today around 9.30 a.m., the administration and police personnel came to Jamia Masjid and asked the Auqaf to close down the mosque and lock its gates. One fails to understand the reason behind this abrupt and arbitrary restriction," a spokesman of the Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid, a caretaker body, said.

The Auqaf said people visit the mosque "to seek forgiveness from Allah Almighty and listen to the soul-stirring sermon of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir".

Several religious leaders also expressed anger over the prolonged "illegal and arbitrary detention" of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. The Mirwaiz, also chairman of the Hurriyat, has been under house arrest since August 5, 2019. A spokesman of the Hurriyat said barring the Mirwaiz from his religious obligations "is greatly regrettable". "It defies the authorities' claim that 'all is well now' in 'Naya Kashmir'. Denying prayers is a direct violation of peoples' fundamental right to practice their religion," the Hurriyat said.

'Release Mirwaiz'

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah demanded that the Mirwaiz be released. "The Mirwaiz has been in detention for a long time. Time has come to release him, so that he leads the prayers and delivers sermons. He has a role to play in bringing people closer to Allah," Dr. Abdullah said.

Tweeting a picture of the locked gates of the Jamia Masjid, NC vice-president Omar Abdullah said, "We are constantly treated to claims of normalcy in J&K and yet the administration betrays its own claims when it resorts to locking up one of our holiest mosques thus denying people the chance to offer prayers on the last Friday of Ramzan."

J&K Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari also expressed deep regret over the closure of the Jamia Masjid. "It's a brazen violation of religious freedom. It is unfortunate and deeply regrettable that the authorities yet again have barred Muslims from offering prayers in Jamia Masjid even on this most auspicious day of Jummat-ul-Vida."

Culture of 'forcing silence' will destroy democracy: Kharge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mallikarjun Kharge

The culture of "forcing" silence and branding people as "anti-nationals" will destroy the Constitution and "finish democracy", Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in his message on the 132nd birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on Friday.

Mr. Kharge alleged that Parliament had been converted into an arena of combat rather than debate and the finest inheritance of the architect of the Indian Constitution needed constant care and preservation.

"The culture of forcing silence on anyone – be it Opposition parties, civil society groups, activists, NGOs, judiciary, media and ordinary citizens and branding them as 'anti-nationals' is a dangerous trend, that will finish our democracy and destroy our Constitution," he said.

Mr. Kharge recalled Dr. Ambedkar's concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly in which he warned against the ills of "hero-worship" in the context of Indian politics.

"But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship," Mr. Kharge said quoting Dr. Ambedkar. The Congress chief urged citizens to introspect if they would allow "degradation of our democracy and pave the way for dictatorship or try to preserve and protect the finest ideals of our Constitution makers".

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "Equality, liberty, fraternity & justice – the universal values Babasaheb Ambedkar championed, will always remain our guiding light & strength! Tributes to the Architect of India's Constitution on his birth anniversary."

"Today we recall perhaps the most highly educated & intellectually gifted of our Founding Fathers. Dr. Babasaheb remains iconic & inspirational. [Jawaharlal] Nehru himself said that, 'no one took greater care and trouble over Constitution making than Dr. Ambedkar'. That legacy is under assault now," Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said on Twitter.

Visva-Bharati pastes notice at residence of Amartya Sen

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The authorities of Visva-Bharati University on Friday pasted a notice on the premises of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen in Santiniketan.

The three-page notice signed by the university authorities was pasted on 'Pratichi', the house of Professor Sen, despite an order by the Executive Magistrate in Birbhum directing officers of the Santiniketan police station to maintain peace and tranquillity in the area and the plot until the disposal of the case.

Gitikantha Majumdar, who is taking care of Professor Sen's property since the academician is abroad, approached the court on Wednesday expressing apprehension that the university may start legal proceedings in the absence of the Nobel laureate.

The notice signed by A. K. Mahato, Joint Registrar, Visva-Bharati, stated that the proceedings (relating to the dispute) would be disposed of through a final order on April 19. The notice referred to Professor Sen as an "alleged unauthorised occupant".

'Uncivilised act'

The Visva Bharati University Faculty Association condemned the "uncivilised act of Visva-Bharati authority of pasting eviction notice issued by its kangaroo court on boundary wall of Pratichi, particularly with the fact that the entire land of 1.38 acres has been mutated in the name of Amartya Sen and Visva-Bharati failed to show original / authenticated copy of the lease deed to an RTI applicant".

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in January visited 'Pratichi' and handed over the land documents to Professor Sen that made it clear that the plot leased to his father, Ashutosh Sen, measured 1.38 acres and not 1.25 acres.

Hate speech: Raipur police summon BJP functionaries

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh police have called at least eight BJP functionaries, including spokespersons and the IT cell in-charge of the State unit, for questioning in connection with alleged hate speeches posted by them on social media.

Taking cognisance of a complaint by the ruling Congress, in which the complainants had objected to terms like "Bhupesh ka Jihadgad" and "Talibani Hukumat" while referring to the Bhupesh Baghel-led State government, the Raipur police have asked the BJP functionaries to visit their nearest police stations and provide facts to substantiate their online comments.

"Your post is going to have an adverse effect on public peace, creating disharmony and resentment in the minds of common people and spoiling communal harmony," the notice read.

Mark of respect: President Droupadi Murmu paying tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at Parliament complex on Friday. Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar is also seen. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

President, PM pay tribute to Ambedkar on birth anniversary

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday paid tribute to Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, a social reformer, economist, jurist and the architect of India's Constitution, on his birth anniversary.

He dedicated his life to the empowerment of the deprived and the exploited sections of society, Mr. Modi tweeted, posting an audio clip of his earlier remarks on Dr. Ambedkar's life.

At a ceremony in the Parliament complex, President Droupadi Murmu and the Prime Minister were joined by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in paying floral tributes to Dr. Ambedkar. Mr. Birla called him an architect of social transformation who fostered equality, freedom, justice and brotherhood.

Minister flags off Ambedkar circuit train to boost tourism

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The government on Friday launched the first Ambedkar circuit tourist train, which will cover prominent places associated with the life of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

The 'Bharat Gaurav Tourist train' is being operated under the 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative, which is aimed at promoting domestic tourism, and is a joint collaboration between the Ministries of Tourism and Railways. The eight-day tour will include visits to places associated with the life of Dr. Ambedkar like New Delhi, Mhow, Nagpur and the sacred Buddhist sites of Sanchi, Sarnath, Gaya, Rajgir, and Nalanda.

"The Bharat Gaurav Tourist train aims to give glimpses of life of Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Ambedkar to all the passengers," Union Minister for Culture and Tourism G. Kishan Reddy said, flagging off the train.

Prime Minister grooves to Bihu beats in Assam

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Exactly 24 hours after creating two world records, more than 11,200 Bihu performers did an embellished encore on Friday.

The repeat performance was not just for the formal handing over of the certificates of record by a representative of the Guinness World Records. It was for the special guests to whom the certificates were given – Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma – at the Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati.

Festive mood: Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Sarusajai stadium in Guwahati on Friday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

The first record created was for "the largest Bihu performance at a single venue" by 11,298 performers – women dancers in colourful *mekhela chadors* and male drummers, *gogona* or jaw harp and *pepa* or buffalo hornpipe players. The second was for the largest *dhol* recital by 3,000 drummers at the same venue.

"The record-breaking Bihu performance was aimed at taking our indigenous cultures to the world stage. The occasion has been made special by the presence of Narendra Modi *dangoria* (honorific equivalent to *ji*)," Mr. Sarma said. Mr. Modi did not just groove from the dais, clapping to the drumbeats. He moved around the venue in a modified battery-operated vehicle and interacted with some Bihu dancers.

"Bihu is a symbol of unity and of the synchronicity between human beings and nature," he said, extolling Assam for the *gamosa* (woven scarf towel), unique silken attires, cuisine, and organic farm produce, some of which have received geographic indications.

Earlier, Mr Modi inaugurated or laid the foundation stones of projects worth ₹14,300 crore. These include the first All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the northeast at Changsari near Guwahati built at the cost of 1,120 crore and for which he had laid the foundation stone in May 2017.

Among the other projects inaugurated were a medical college in Kokrajhar, Nagaon, and Nalbari, several railway projects worth ₹7,300 crore, and an ethanol plant constructed in eastern Assam's Namrup at an investment of ₹1,709 crore.

The Prime Minister launched the Aapke Dwar Ayushman campaign by distributing Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana cards to 1.1 crore eligible beneficiaries.

He also laid the foundation stones for the Assam Advanced Healthcare Innovation Institute within the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati complex and the Palasbari-Sualkuchi bridge across the Brahmaputra River to the west of Guwahati.

Bihar district tense as Dalit leader shot dead

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

A tense situation prevailed in Vaishali district of Bihar on Friday, a day after a Dalit leader and member of the Bhim Army was gunned down by four unidentified persons.

The incident took place at Panchdamiya village under the Lalganj police station as preparations were under way to mark the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. A witness said the four assailants who reached the spot on motorcycles touched the feet of Rakesh Paswan before firing at least 20 rounds at him. Sharma was rushed to Sadar Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

On Friday, during the funeral procession of Paswan, supporters of the Bhim Army damaged public property and tried to set the Lalganj police station on fire. Despite heavy deployment of police force, supporters damaged three police van.

A vehicle belonging to the station house officer, Amrendra Kumar, was pushed into a pond.

Moving out: Rahul Gandhi's belongings being shifted out of his official bungalow at 12 Tughlak Lane, in New Delhi, on Friday. PTI

Rahul starts vacating bungalow that he occupied for 19 years

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, without waiting for the outcome of the appeal to stay his conviction in a criminal defamation case, started shifting his belongings from his 12, Tughlaq Lane bungalow on Friday.

Following his disqualification from the Lok Sabha after being convicted in the defamation case, Mr. Gandhi was asked to vacate 12, Tughlaq Lane premises by April 22. The belongings were shifted to his mother and Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's 10, Janpath residence.

He has been occupying the bungalow for 19 years.

Mr. Gandhi could have applied for an extension, citing the ongoing legal process as a stay on his conviction and restoration of Lok Sabha membership would entitle him to it.

However, responding to his eviction notice on March 27, Mr. Gandhi had said he would vacate his premises. "...As an elected member of the Lok Sabha over the last four terms, it is the mandate of the people to which I owe the happy memories of my time spent here. Without prejudice to my rights, I will, of course, abide by the details contained in your letter," he wrote to the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Shah sets a target of 35 seats for BJP from Bengal in 2024

No one will dare to attack Ram Navami processions if party emerges victorious in most of the constituencies in the Lok Sabha polls, says Home Minister; Trinamool brands him a 'seasonal bird'

Shiv Sahay Singh
SURI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday sounded the poll bugle for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal by setting a target of 35 seats for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the State. The BJP had won 18 of the 42 Lok Saha seats in the State in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Launching a scathing attack on the Trinamool Congress government, the BJP leader raised the issue of corruption in the recruitment scam as well as violence during Ram Navami processions in the State.

"Give Modi *ji* [Narendra Modi] 35 seats from the State and nobody will dare to attack the processions of Ram Navami," the Home Minister said, addressing a public meeting at Suri in Birbhum district.

While allegations of inciting violence during Ram Navami were made at a section of BJP leaders, the Home Minister blamed the "appeasement politics" of the State's ruling party for communal flare-ups at Rishra in Hooghly and Shibpur in Howrah.

Fiery salvo: Union Home Minister Amit Shah waves during a rally organised by the BJP in Birbhum of West Bengal, on Friday. PTI

Ahead of local polls

Mr. Shah's two-day visit to the State comes after 11 months and just ahead of panchayat elections in the State. The BJP leader urged people to vote for the BJP to put an end to "violence, infiltration, cow smuggling and corruption" in West Bengal.

Citing the instance of the neighbouring State of Assam where the BJP is in power, the Home Minister claimed that infiltration and cow smuggling have stopped in the State. "Give the BJP 35 seats in 2024 and the government of Mamata *ji* [Banerjee] will collapse before 2025," he said.

Mr. Shah also targeted Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew and Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, in his speech. He used the phrase "*Didi aur Bhatija* [aunt and her nephew]" a number of times and alleged that Ms. Banerjee's only intention was to appoint her nephew as the Chief Minister. "The Chief Minister might dream that her nephew will be the Chief Minister. Today I want to assure the people that the next Chief Minister of the State will be from the BJP," he said.

The Home Minister made references to the recruitment scam and the crores of cash seized from houses of associates of Trinamool leaders. The Home Minister also touched upon the ongoing investigation in the seizure of a huge cache of explosives from Birbhum and said that had it not been for the NIA (National Investigation Agency) the explosives would never have been recovered.

The Trinamool Congress reacted by calling Mr. Shah a "seasonal bird". "A seasonal bird is here in Bengal but no one wants to see it! Mr @AmitShah , GO BACK TO DELHI and DO YOUR JOB. Clearly, no one in Bengal is interested in your trash-talk, your lies, your hate-laden agenda. Go spew venom elsewhere!," the party tweeted from its official handle.

Nitish plans to travel across India to forge Opposition unity

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

Enthused Janata Dal (United) workers on Friday welcomed party leader and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at the party's headquarters in Patna by shouting slogans of "the country's PM should be like Nitish Kumar".

Mr. Kumar, however, asked the party workers not to shout such slogans and said he will travel across the country in 2024 as part of his "mission".

Mr. Kumar had met most of the non-BJP Opposition leaders, including from the Congress and the Left, in Delhi recently to forge Opposition unity in the 2024 general elections.

Sources in the JD(U) told *The Hindu* that the non-BJP Opposition leaders would meet again in Delhi in the last week of April to take "a step ahead" in their effort of uniting all Opposition parties against the BJP. "We'll all talk to each other soon and decide which party would contest on how many seats and from where", said Mr. Kumar.

According to , party sources, Mr. Kumar is likely to meet Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekar Rao and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee soon. Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav is said to have been given the responsibility of talking with Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav on the matter.

Nitish Kumar

Meanwhile, the BJP has taken jibe over Mr. Kumar's efforts towards Opposition's unity against the BJP in the 2024 poll. "There is no vacancy for PM in 2024. Nitish Kumar *Mungerilal ke haseen sapne dekh rahe hain* [Nitish Kumar is having Mungerilal's sweet dreams]", said senior BJP leader Giriraj Singh.

Inordinate delay in mercy plea decisions benefiting convicts: SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed States and other authorities not to delay their decision on mercy petitions filed by death row convicts, to avoid the condemned persons from gaining any advantage or benefit from the hold-up.

"We observe and direct all the States/appropriate authorities before whom the mercy petitions are to be filed and/or who are required to decide the mercy petitions against the death sentence, such mercy petitions are decided at the earliest so that the benefit of delay in not deciding the mercy petitions is not accrued to the accused and the accused are not benefited by such an inordinate delay and the accused may not take the advantage of such inordinate delay," a Bench led by Justice M.R. Shah directed in an order passed on Thursday.

Case in question

The order was based on an appeal by the State of Maharashtra against a Bombay High Court decision to commute the death penalty of Renuka Shinde to life sentence after her mercy plea was kept pending with the Governor for seven years and 10 months for "unexplained" reasons. The Bench did not interfere with the High Court's decision to commute the death penalty but ordered that the woman should serve her sentence for the entirety of her natural life without remission.

In its order, the Bench referred to apex court judgments which showed that inordinate delay in deciding mercy petitions would work in favour of the convict. It said unexplained and prolonged delay in deciding mercy pleas was a valid ground to commute the death penalty into life imprisonment.

SC Collegium recommends authors of 'outstanding' judgments as Delhi HC judges

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court's Collegium system of judicial appointments is grading the judgments of candidates under its zone of consideration. The best of judgments is given the grade of "outstanding" and their authors are recommended for judgeships in constitutional courts.

The measure is one of many introduced to bring in a new sense of objectivity even as the government has made unprecedented attempts to malign the Collegium.

Collegium resolutions of April 12 recommending three judicial officers to the Bench of the Delhi High Court show that a 'Judgment Evaluation Committee' has pored over the candidates' written judgments and found them "outstanding". The judicial officers are Girish Kathpalia, Dharmesh Sharma, and Manoj Jain.

The beginnings of the move to review the judgments of prospective candidates could be traced to the Collegium resolutions of September last year when Justice U.U. Lalit was the Chief Justice of India.

In a resolution on October 9, the Lalit Collegium revealed how the "procedure of circulating the judgments of the prospective candidates and making an objective assessment of their relative merit was introduced for the first time in the meeting held on September 26, 2022".

The same resolution also revealed that Justice Dutta's name was cleared in the Collegium meeting of September 26 last year. However, the Collegium had, on that day, deferred its decision to recommend 10 other judges after a "demand was raised by some of the members of the Collegium that we should have more judgments of the other candidates".

Step-by-step narrative

Collegium resolutions now give a step-by-step narrative of the process of appointment, starting from the recommendation of the candidate's name by the respective High Court Collegium, to the approval by the Chief Ministers and Governors, to an insight into the remarks made by the Intelligence Bureau about a candidate's personal and professional image and integrity to opinions by consultee judges about the person's suitability.

Chief Justice Chandrachud has also tasked the Supreme Court's Centre for Research and Planning to work with the Collegium's secretariat to collect data on the judicial work of senior High Court judges.

India, Armenia will one day share a strategic partnership: envoy

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The increasing political cooperation between Armenia and India must be "institutionalised in a long-term cooperation" between the two countries, Armenian envoy in India Youri Babakhanian said, adding that some day they will turn this into a strategic partnership.

"We have very long historical ties. I call this civilisational partnership... Some day we will turn this into a strategic partnership and I think that day is close. We share common interests and we have no contradictions," he said in response to a question from *The Hindu* while speaking at a seminar organised by India Central Asia Foundation on Thursday.

Armenia recently signed a major defence deal with India for procurement of Pinaka multi-rocket launch systems and their ammunition, among others, in a deal worth around ₹2,500 crore.

In the backdrop of the expanding defence cooperation, Armenia will soon have a Defence Attaché (DA) at its embassy here, it has been learnt. At present, neither country has a dedicated DA in the other country. For India, its DA in Russia is also tasked to cover Armenia.

Speaking at the seminar on the situation in the South Caucasus, comprising Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the envoy said that the U.S. and Europe certainly remain important actors in the region but their influence is declining.

Meet on Chabahar: countries emphasise 'territorial integrity'

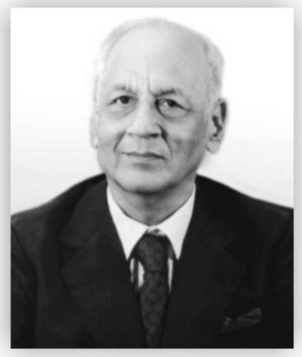
Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

India and several Central Asian countries have emphasised the need to respect "sovereignty and territorial integrity" while pushing for connectivity projects, during the Joint Working Group Meeting on the Chabahar port, held in Mumbai on April 12 and 13.

The meeting saw the participation of Deputy Ministers and senior officials of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and India. Special invitees included the country representative of the United Nations' World Food Programme.

This coincides with the ministerial meeting of neighbouring countries of Afghanistan in Samarkand, where China expressed its willingness to help Taliban-led Kabul join the Belt and Road Initiative. A spokesperson for Taliban, however, supported India's drive for Chabahar. "We are open to talk about trade, investment and mutual cooperation with the neighbouring and regional countries, including India," said Suhail Shaheen, head of Taliban Political Office.

In Memoriam



Shri T.S. Santhanam
08.11.1912 – 15.04.2005

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GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
'e' Procurement Tender Notice RFP 02/2023-24/CE(GVMC)/SE(W-II)/EE-IV/DB/GVMC, Dt:13-04-2023
RFP Tender Notice No.03/2023-24/CE(GVMC)/SE(W-II)/EE-IV/DB/GVMC, Dt:13-04-2023
Number of works -1,
Tender Opening Dt. 13-04-2023, Closing Date 29-04-2023
Note: Further details at http://www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in
O/o the EE-IV Cell No. 8187897572
For Commissioner

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY HYDERABAD
DIRECTORATE OF UNIVERSITY FOREIGN RELATIONS
Kukatpally, Hyderabad - 500 085, Telangana (India)
A-GRADE
FN/PIO/CIWG/NRI ADMISSIONS NOTIFICATION (2023-24)
Applications are invited from the eligible Foreign Nationals/Persons of Indian Origin/Children of Indian Workers in Gulf Countries / Non Resident Indian candidates seeking admission into B.Tech / B.Tech (IDP) / BBA (Data Analytics) / M.Tech / M.Sc / MBA / MCA / M.Pharmacy / Ph.D courses for the Academic Year 2023-24. The application form is available in the DUFR office or it can be download from the website or apply through online application available on the University website www.jntuhdufr.com, www.jntuh.ac.in. The filled in application is to be submitted along with required documents and a DD of Rs.1000/- in favour of "The Registrar, UFR Account, JNTUH", payable at Hyderabad. For further details www.jntuhdufr.com, www.jntuh.ac.in.
Date: 15.04.2023
R.O. No.: 34-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2023-24 Sd/- REGISTRAR

BHARAT DYNAMICS LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
GACHIBOWLI, HYDERABAD - 500 032.
Ref:BDL/CC/OT/GEM/01/2023-24 Date : 15.04.2023
GeM TENDER NOTICE
Inviting Competitive Bidding

Sl.No.	GeM Bid No.	Description
1	GEM/2023/B/3344645	Supply Installation, Commissioning & Testing of CCTV Surveillance System for Entire Perimeter Wall at BDL Kanchanbagh Unit on Turnkey Basis

Please visit website http://gem.gov.in for further details. Bids should be submitted through GeM Portal only. "corrigendum if any shall be issued through GEM portal only and not in Newspapers"
*Bidders are Requested to apply for online Vendor Registration in BDL website http://172.25.1.64/bdldesign/login.php for business prospects.
Deputy General Manager (Corp Comml)

The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd
KMML
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking) Sankaramangalam, Kollam-691 583
Phone: 0476-2651215 to 2651217, e-mail: contact@kmml.com, URL: www.kmml.com
TENDER NOTICE
For more details, please visit E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com

No.	Tender ID	Items
1	2023_KMML_571144_1	For the supply of 1100V grade XLPE insulated Steel armoured, PVC over sheathed Copper conductor cable
2	2023_KMML_571162_1	For the supply of Built Up Beam
3	2023_KMML_570379_1	For the supply of Brick acid Resistant for Digester
4	2023_KMML_569940_1	For the supply of Potassium Chloride
5	2023_KMML_569951_1	For the supply of Bricks for Chlorinator
6	2023_KMML_570383_1	AMC for providing external inspection & follow up services for the period 2023-24

Chavara 13.04.2023 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM TECHNOPARK HARMONY@WORK
Kerala www.keralait.org
RFP No: 166/2023-24
Proposals are invited from Technical Consultants for providing Consultancy Service Contract for Architectural, Engineering and Project Management Services for Technopark.
For further details, please visit
https://www.technopark.org/tenders
Date: 15.04.2023 Chief Executive Officer
Trivandrum Technopark, Trivandrum - 695 581
Ph: 0471-2700222,
Fax: 0471-2700171
RO/00886/D3/2023/I&PRD

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED
CIN U75302KL2017SGC05027
E - TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders are invited for the following projects of Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Limited Project Area 1) Request for proposal RFP for Selection of Contractor for Development of Smart Roads and Underground Ducting Including Utility Shifting of Water Supply and Power lines in ABD area Under Smart (Corporation Roads) in Thiruvananthapuram.

Sl. No.	Name of Project	E-Tender ID	PAC Amount (Exclusive Of GST)	Bid Submission Last Date
Selection of Contractor for Development of Smart Roads and Underground Ducting Including Utility Shifting of Water Supply and Power lines in ABD area Under Smart (Corporation Roads) in Thiruvananthapuram.				
1.	Road ID 185 (MRT Road)	2023_SCTLT_552621_3	Rs.1,66,77,152	18/04/2023
2.	Road ID 31A (Keezhe Thampanoor Road)	2023_SCTLT_551304_2	Rs.3,20,36,478	18/04/2023
3	Road ID 180 & 181 (Kamukuvilakom Road and Ankalamman Nagar)	2023_SCTLT_551497_2	Rs.3,51,84,212	18/04/2023
4	Road ID 100 (Justice Sankaranarayana Street)	2023_SCTLT_551252_3	Rs.2,64,00,214	18/04/2023

Date and Time of Opening Price Bid: To Be Intimated Separately to Technically Qualified Bidders by e-mail. All the RFP documents and details are available on the e-Procurement Website. Bids are only accepted online on the Website https://etenders.kerala.gov.in
(Sd/-) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Ltd

INBRIEF

Over 60 injured as iron bridge collapses in Udhampur

At least 62 civilians were injured as a footbridge collapsed during Baisakhi festivities in Jammu's Udhampur district on Friday. "A footbridge collapsed during the Baisakhi celebration at Beni Sangam in Bain village in Udhampur's Chenani Block," Vinod Kumar, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Udhampur, said. "Twenty-five were referred to the district hospital. The evacuation was done in half an hour. Five injured people in critical condition were referred to Jammu," Krittika Jyotsna, Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur, said. Preliminary reports suggested the bridge collapsed as it could not bear the weight of people standing on it.

Hanuman Jayanti rally ends peacefully amid high alert

Hanuman Jayanti was celebrated on Friday amid massive police deployment in western Odisha town of Sambalpur where a communal clash took place on April 12. As many as 42 platoons of police were positioned in different parts of Sambalpur in the evening when troupes of revelers started moving in groups. The CCTV coverage of Sambalpur was strengthened while police personnel with handheld cameras recorded the events. Protesting against stone pelting at a bike rally on April 12, Hanuman Jayanti Samonyoya Samiti had called for a 36-hour bandh, which was backed by BJP. A delegation of BJP MLAs camped in Sambalpur.

Oting ambush: no sanction to prosecute 30 Army men

The Centre has denied sanction to prosecute 30 Army men who were allegedly involved in the December 2021 killing of 13 civilians in a botched ambush at Oting in Nagaland's Mon district, an official said. This has been communicated by Nagaland police to the Mon district and sessions judges court, where the chargesheet has been filed, as required by law, Inspector General of Police-CID Roopa M. said in a release on Thursday. "The competent authority (Department of Military Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Government of India) has conveyed its denial to accord sanction for prosecution against all the 30 accused," she said. PTI

Christian body expresses pain over church demolitions

The United Christian Forum of North East India (UCFNEI) has expressed anguish over the demolition of three churches in Manipur and the alleged manhandling of two church elders from Meghalaya who attended post-Easter celebrations in Patna. "Under these circumstances, we appeal to all the faithful to continue to pray for peace and harmony while standing united," UCFNEI spokesperson Allen Brooks said in a statement on Friday. On April 11, the Manipur government razed three churches – one each of Catholic, Baptist and Lutheran – in the Imphal East district following the vacation of a stay order by the High Court of Manipur.

NISAR satellite to map Himalayas' seismic zones

It will also serve as a valuable tool to give warning of land subsidence as scientists can use the data collected every 12 days and under all-weather conditions to study deformation patterns

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

A forthcoming satellite, NISAR, jointly developed the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the U.S. will map the most earthquake-prone regions in the Himalayas with unprecedented regularity. The data this will generate can potentially give advance warning of land subsidence, as recently observed in Joshimath, Uttarakhand, as well point to places that are at greatest risk from earthquakes.

The NISAR satellite, expected to cost approximately $900 million (with ISRO contributing about one-tenth) will use two frequency bands: the L-band and S-band to image the seismically active Himalayan region that will, every 12 days, create a "deformation map", said Prakash Chauhan, Director, ISRO-National Remote Sensing Centre at a seminar here this week.

Sensitive area: A large section of the Himalayan region falls in Zone V, with the highest risk of strong earthquakes. K.R. DEEPAK

"The geoscience community can use this to determine the how strain is building up in various parts of the Himalayas," he said. These two frequency bands will together provide high-resolution, all-weather data from the satellite that is expected to follow a sun-synchronous orbit and will be launched in January 2024.

Scientists from the Geological Survey of India in 2021 published a "strain map" of the Himalayas based on data from 1,252 GPS stations along the Himalayas. It identified regions that had the greatest odds of generating earthquakes of magnitude above 8 and their extent. "These many stations are still too few and there's only one satellite (Sentinel) that we rely on...with NISAR, the costliest space mission ever, we can have a game-changer in earth-science observation," said Dr. Chauhan.

While satellite imagery to study deformation in land is already employed, the frequency at which observations are taken and the clarity of the images are critical, V.K. Gahalaut, of the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) told *The Hindu*. "With a frequency of 12 days and the ability to be able to provide images even under cloudy conditions, NISAR would be a valuable tool to study deformation patterns, such as in Joshimath," he added.

'No plan to import milk products as there is no shortage'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Parshottam Rupala

Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala on Friday ruled out any assessment that the country has been facing stagnation in milk production and that the government may consider import of butter and ghee.

The Minister's statement comes days after Secretary for Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajesh Kumar Singh said the country was facing such a stagnation and that the government would consider all options, including import of butter and ghee, if the situation remains unchanged.

"There is no shortage of milk in the country and the government is regularly monitoring. The demand has increased. We have a huge untapped area, we will try to tap that... We will manage it properly and there is no need to worry," Mr. Rupala said on the sidelines of an event to launch the Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI) and the World Bank-funded Animal Health System Support for One Health (AHSSOH).

APPI and AHSSOH are aimed at enhancing India's preparedness and response to animal pandemics and to create an ecosystem for a better animal health management system. Launching the projects, Mr. Rupala said the livestock sector plays a critical role in the country's economy and food security.

Kejriwal summoned by CBI for questioning in excise case tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Arvind Kejriwal

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been summoned for questioning by the CBI at 11 a.m. on Sunday in connection with its investigation into the Delhi excise policy case. It had earlier arrested former deputy CM Manish Sisodia in the case.

The news drew strong reactions from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), with Senior party leader Sanjay Singh saying that Mr. Kejriwal was being targeted for speaking in the Delhi Assembly about the alleged links between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and industrialist Gautam Adani.

"This notice is a conspiracy to arrest Mr. Kejriwal. This notice will neither be able to silence the AAP nor Mr. Kejriwal from exposing the corruption of the PM," he said.

The allegation that the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22 favoured certain dealers led to an investigation by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). In its second chargesheet against 17 accused, the ED alleged that a part of the "kickback" was used for the AAP's poll campaign ahead of the Goa Assembly election in 2022. The charge-sheet says that one of the accused, Sameer Mahandru, allegedly told the agency that "the new excise policy was a brainchild of Arvind Kejriwal".

Reacting to the summons, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said that Mr. Kejriwal, the mastermind of the liquor scam, has finally been called for questioning.

The Delhi Congress said that it has now become clear that Mr. Kejriwal was the mastermind behind the liquor deal, and that he was fully in the know of everything that transpired in the case.

Home Ministry to keep a watch on govt. lawyers handling criminal cases

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

In an effort to ensure timely disposal of criminal cases, the Ministry of Home Affairs' e-prosecution portal has added a new feature that will also fix accountability on government lawyers. The system will send alerts to senior officers whenever a public prosecutor seeks a stay in a criminal case more than twice, a senior government official said.

The e-prosecution module is part of the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) that links and enables seamless transfer of data and information among different pillars of the criminal justice system – such as courts, police, jails and forensic science laboratories – from one platform. The module has been implemented in 751 prosecution districts, and software configuration for the remaining 153 districts is in progress.

Earlier, the main pillars of the ICJS, including the e-police, e-courts, e-jails, e-forensics and e-prosecution, were developed independently in the form of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS). This system connects more than 16,000 police stations across the country and has a database of 28.98 crore police records that can only be accessed by law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.

The Ministry has been emphasising investigations based on forensics to improve the conviction rate. Meanwhile, the National Informatics Centre (NIC) is in the process of integrating the module directly with the e-courts. "If a public prosecutor demands adjournment, the system generates alerts. The issue will be flagged to the concerned stakeholders immediately. The senior officers will be alerted and measures can be taken that the trial is not delayed," the official said.

The Ministry also tracks investigations into sexual assault cases across the country, every two months, through its analytics tool – the Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences.

Towards speedy justice

Ministry of Home Affairs adds new features to its e-prosecution portal, streamlining criminal case disposal. A lowdown:

- The e-prosecution module, an added feature, is part of the Interoperable Criminal Justice System that enables seamless data transfer among various pillars of the criminal justice system
- The module has been implemented in 751 prosecution districts. In 153 districts, the software configuration is in progress
- The National Informatics Centre is working on integrating the module directly with e-courts to further streamline processes
- Sexual assault case investigations are also tracked through the Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences

Asad, Ghulam were killed in retaliatory fire: U.P. Police

Press Trust of India
JHANSI

Uttar Pradesh Police tried to capture gangster-politician Atiq Ahmed's son Asad and his accomplice alive during the encounter in Jhansi but the latter opened indiscriminate fire at STF officials and were killed in retaliatory firing, according to the FIR filed in the case.

The FIR was filed at Badagaon police station of Jhansi after the encounter on Thursday.

With these two deaths, the number of alleged criminals gunned down in police encounters in U.P has risen to 183 in the six years of Yogi Adityanath's government, officials said. Data showed that more than 10,900 police encounters have taken place in the state since March 2017. In these encounters, 23,300 alleged criminals were arrested and 5,046 were injured.

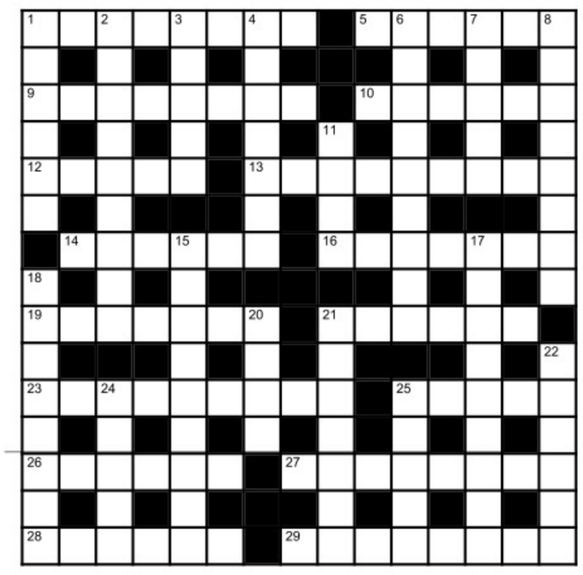
However, Opposition parties and critics of the government have alleged that many of these encounters were "fake" and demanded a high-level probe to bring out the facts.

TH CROSSWORD + 13840

(set by Lightning)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Diligence in attempt to follow river (8)
5 Moving a great distance protects old boy (6)
9 Atmosphere at first nice, instantly became ridiculous (8)
10 Edit gory performance (6)
12 Perhaps key record (5)
13 Personality of wild archer - tact missing in the end (9)
14 Want good reputation without batting (6)
16 Clip tresses and hurt one accountant by mistake (7)
19 Deceit one engineered is extraordinarily clear (7)
21 Criticize a gent leaving northern country (6)
23 Medical facility in a railway company separated (9)
25 Father with new signal (5)
26 Endless pattern of squares on paper that may be signed (6)
27 Exist in a more unrestrained way to surprise (8)
28 Spain overturned sporting event of value (6)
29 Gets tray redesigned for long-term plan (8)

Down

1 Trim age sensitive contents for what may be seen (6)
2 Bad credit? In trouble? This may let you withdraw money (5,4)
3 Society to listen and cut down (5)
4 Go around again, go green (7)
6 Running musical drama with primarily tense, revolutionary leader (9)
7 Not appropriate at home apartment (5)
8 Destroyed tiny tree in total (8)
11 Money from Cuba - it's grey in colour (4)
15 Break until deer ran amok (9)
17 Almost arrived at overpass by British university (9)
18 Doctor concealing love, about to become ordinary (8)
20 Talk with cold bowler (4)
21 Reward at an empty ground (7)
22 Been over cagy entirely in second half, get impetus (6)
24 Baffle Ethiopian helping to make ships (5)
25 The Destroyer has four in ruins (5)

SUDOKU

		6			4			2
5	8		9					
	7			8	5	4		
		5					3	
	3		2		1		8	
	4					7		
		7	6	9			4	
					3		7	8
6			4			9		

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

A	D	B	U	D	I	L	T	
H	Y	E	N	A	T	A	R	A
N	T	U	L	A	R	N	E	A
K	N	R	R	O	I	S	T	E
R	M	A	S	C	A	R	A	A
V	U	U	A	H				
M	O	A	N	E	S	O	T	E
R	I	C	A	L	A	T	S	
I	I	A	I	Z	E	I	S	T
A	R	C	F	A	U	L	T	D
V	U	C	E	T	M	A	Z	E
R	B	A	I	J	A	N	L	I
E	U	U	D	S	S	O	S	B
L	U	N	D	E	R	C	O	C
O	N	U	T	U	R	I	A	E
E	A	E	M	I	G	R	A	T
I	O	N	N	O	R	M	S	P
E	L	N	T	T	Y	T		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	2	5	9	6	3	7	1	4
7	1	3	5	2	4	9	8	6
4	9	6	8	7	1	2	5	3
6	8	9	4	1	7	3	2	5
3	5	7	2	8	6	1	4	9
2	4	1	3	5	9	6	7	8
9	7	2	6	4	5	8	3	1
5	3	8	1	9	2	4	6	7
1	6	4	7	3	8	5	9	2

FAITH

Significance of Baisakhi

Baisakhi marks the first day of the month of Baisakh and is traditionally celebrated on the thirteenth or fourteenth of April. It synchronises with the celebration of spring harvest in north India. In many parts of India, it is also the date of the Indian solar new year. It corresponds to other festivals celebrating the traditional solar new year like Pohela, Boisakh, Bohag, Bhihu, Vishu and Tamil Puthandu. It marks the solar transition to Aries. Baisakhi is culturally linked to the harvesting of the crops. The farmer celebrates an intimate connection with his land, with which he shares a deep bond. It is a means of sustenance, and he has a reciprocal relationship with it. As he reaps the harvest, he offers gratitude and prays for prosperity and abundance for his family and community, said Prof. Kumool Abbi in a lecture.

Thus in Punjab, Baisakhi is of tremendous cultural, religious social and spiritual significance at myriad levels. It demonstrates the cultural heritage of the people of Punjab and its rich folklore. Baisakhi holds special significance for the Sikhs, historically it marks the birth of the Khalsa order by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs on April 13, 1699. After the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur for refusing to convert to Islam under the order of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh became the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. To commemorate the occasion people pay their obeisance in Gurdwaras, partaking the sacramental karha prashad and langar (community kitchen). The festival of Baisakhi carries forward the robust resilient spirit and vitality of Punjabiyat.

PARIS

Russian oil exports hit near three-year high in March: IEA

REUTERS

Russian oil exports jumped to their highest level in almost three years in March despite Western sanctions, but revenues were down sharply from last year, the International Energy Agency said on Friday. The IEA that total shipments from Russia rose by 600,000 barrels per day to 8.1 million bpd last month. AFP

TEHRAN

Thousands of Iranians rally in annual pro-Palestinian events

REUTERS

Thousands of Iranians took to the streets on Friday across the country to mark Jerusalem Day in solidarity with Palestinians, state media reported. The rallies, an annual fixture since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, are held on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. AFP

BEIJING

China 'concerned' about impact of Afghan policies on women's rights

AFP

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang said his country is "concerned" about the impact of recent policies introduced by Afghanistan's Taliban government on the rights of women. Mr. Qin's comments come after a decision by the conservative Taliban authorities to bar women from working for the UN sparked international outrage. AFP

TALLAHASSEE

DeSantis signs Florida GOP's 6-week abortion ban into law

AP

Republican Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law a Bill approved by the Florida Legislature to ban abortions after six weeks of pregnancy. The ban gives Mr. DeSantis a key political victory among Republican voters as he prepares to launch a presidential candidacy built on his brand as a conservative standard bearer. AP

China's Xi, Brazil's Lula meet in Beijing to boost ties

Talks focused largely on trade ties and other forms of cooperation, but also touched on the conflict in Ukraine, with the leaders agreeing on the need for a negotiated settlement

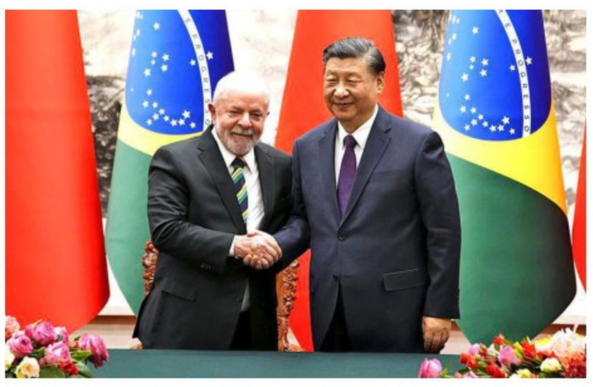
Associated Press
BEIJING

Chinese leader Xi Jinping met with visiting Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on Friday as part of a push to boost ties between two of the world's largest developing nations.

The meeting came on the second day of Mr. Lula's visit to China, his country's most important trading partner and key ally in his bid to challenge Western-dominated economic institutions.

Mr. Lula was greeted with full military honours, including a 21-gun salute, at the Great Hall of the People adjacent to Tiananmen Square in the heart of the Chinese capital.

Their talks focused largely on trade ties and other forms of cooperation, but also touched on the conflict in Ukraine, with the leaders agreeing on the need for a negotiated settlement, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.



Friendly ties: Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (left) with Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on Friday. AP

"As comprehensive strategic partners, China and Brazil share extensive common interests," Mr. Xi said, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. "China ... sees the relationship as a high priority on its diplomatic agenda," he said.

The leaders then oversaw the signing of agreements in areas ranging from agriculture to aeronautics. That underscored the improvement in relations since Mr. Lula took over in January from right-wing populist Jair Bolsonaro, who showed little interest in foreign travel and under whom relations with China were often tense.

Mr. Lula's visit included the swearing in on Thursday of former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff as head of the Chinese-backed New Development Bank, which is funding infrastructure projects in Brazil and elsewhere in the developing world.

The bank portrays itself as an alternative to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which often impose loan conditions that developing nations criticise as punitive. It was established as part of a larger framework of cooperation between countries known as BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – and has approved 99 loan projects totaling more than $34 billion, mainly for infrastructure projects, according to China's Foreign Ministry.

China is Brazil's biggest export market, each year buying tens of billions of dollars of soybeans, beef, iron ore, poultry, pulp, sugar cane, cotton and crude oil. Brazil is the biggest recipient of Chinese investment in Latin America, according to Chinese state media.

Pakistan gets closer to IMF deal after UAE pledges $1 bln

Reuters
ISLAMABAD

The United Arab Emirates has confirmed financial support of $1 billion to Pakistan, the South Asian nation's Finance Minister said on Friday, removing a key hurdle to securing a much-awaited bailout tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The commitment is one of the lender's last requirements before approving a staff-level pact to release a tranche of $1.1 billion, delayed for months, that is crucial for Pakistan to resolve an acute balance of payments crisis.

The external financing is needed to fully fund the balance of payments gap for the fiscal year that ends in June.

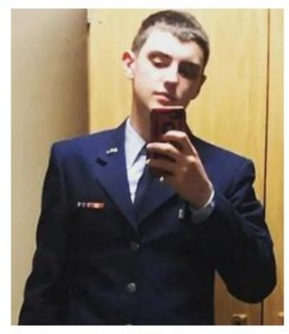
U.S. guardsman charged in decade's biggest data leak

Agence France-Presse
BOSTON

A young national guardsman was charged on Friday with orchestrating the most damaging leak of U.S. classified documents for a decade, as the government signalled it intends to make an example of the 21-year-old.

Jack Teixeira was arrested on Thursday following a week-long probe into the leak of documents – which unveiled U.S. concern over Ukraine's ability to fend off the Russian invasion, and showed Washington has spied on allies Israel and South Korea.

It is the biggest such breach since the 2013 dump of National Security Agency (NSA) documents by Edward Snowden and raises tough questions over the access of junior official Mr. Teixeira to high-level secrets.



Jack Douglas Teixeira

Unauthorised retention

Mr. Teixeira, who wore a beige jumpsuit and appeared glum at his first court appearance in Boston, was charged with the "unauthorised retention and transmission of national defence information."

He is also accused of the "unauthorised removal and retention of classified documents or material." The counts carry prison sentences of 10 years and five years, respectively.

He was not required to enter a plea and was held pending a detention hearing set for next Wednesday.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said there were "very serious penalties" associated with the crimes. U.S. President Joe Biden said on Friday that he had ordered the military and intelligence community to tighten security around sensitive information after the breach.

Mr. Teixeira is suspected of posting the documents, some dated as recently as early March, to a private chat group on the social media platform Discord.

Court backs Macron's pensions reform

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

The decision represents a victory for Macron, but it comes at a major personal cost

France's constitutional court on Friday approved the key elements of President Emmanuel Macron's pension reform, paving the way for him to implement the unpopular changes that have sparked months of protests and strikes.

The nine-member Constitutional Council ruled in favour of key provisions, including raising the retirement age to 64 from 62, judging the legislation to be in accordance with the law. Six minor proposals were rejected, including efforts to force large companies to publish data on how many people over 55 they employ, and a separate idea to create a special contract for older workers.

The decision represents a victory for Mr. Macron, but analysts say it has come at a major personal cost for the 45-year-old.

The President's personal ratings are close to their lowest-ever level, and many voters have been outraged by his decision to defy hostile public opinion and ram the pensions law through the Lower House of Parliament without a vote.

China not to sell any arms in Ukraine war

Associated Press
BEIJING

China won't sell weapons to either side in the war in Ukraine, the country's Foreign Minister said on Friday, responding to Western concerns that Beijing could provide military assistance to Russia.

China has maintained that it is neutral in the conflict, while backing Russia politically, rhetorically and economically at a time when Western nations have imposed punishing sanctions and sought to isolate Moscow for its invasion of its neighbour.

Qin Gang is the highest-level Chinese official to make such an explicit statement about arms sales to Russia. He added that China would also regulate the export of items with dual civilian and military use.

The minister also reiterated China's willingness to help find a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

At the same news conference, Mr. Qin also blamed Taiwan's government for heightened regional tensions after Beijing held large-scale military drills in an attempt to intimidate the island it claims as its own territory.

In February, Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned that China's arms and ammunition involvement in the Kremlin's war effort would be a "serious problem."

Germany FM urges China to tell 'Russian aggressor to stop the war in Ukraine'

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China stays neutral, but its refusal to condemn the invasion leads to accusations of siding with Russia

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock urged Beijing on Friday to ask "the Russian aggressor to stop the war" in Ukraine, saying "no other country has more influence on Russia than China".

Speaking after a meeting with her Chinese counterpart Qin Gang in Beijing, Ms. Baerbock said she had also expressed concerns about human rights issues and warned of the dangers of escalating tensions with Taiwan.

Her visit to the Chinese capital comes a week after that of French President Emmanuel Macron and the head of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, who also urged Beijing to play a greater role in resolving the crisis.

"It is good that China has signalled its commitment to a solution but I have to say frankly that I wonder why the Chinese position so far does not include a call on the aggressor Russia to stop the war," Ms. Baerbock said.

China has positioned itself as a neutral mediator throughout the conflict, but its refusal to condemn the invasion and a recent trip to Moscow by President Xi Jinping have led Western powers to accuse it of favouring its traditional ally Russia.

After Mr. Qin and Ms. Baerbock met, China announced that Defence Minister Li Shangfu would visit Russia from Sunday at the invitation of his counterpart Sergei Shoigu.

1% of Indians take home 22% of the country's income.

1% of Indians account for 45% of all flights.

3% of Indians make up all unique credit card holders.

2.6% of Indians invest in mutual funds.

8% of Indian households constitute 100% car ownership.

6.5% of Indian users account for about 44% of UPI transactions.

5% of Indian users account for about 33% of orders placed on Zomato.

7.4% of urban Indians read an English newspaper.

Do the math. Thank You.

Hindustan Times | THE HINDU | The Telegraph | THE TIMES OF INDIA

All data presented sourced from The Indus Valley Report, 2023 by Blume Ventures (bit.ly/indusvalley2023). Total Readership data is based on IRS Q4, 2019.

INBRIEF

PE inflow in real estate flat at $4.2 bn in FY23: Anarock

Private equity investment in real estate remained stable in the last fiscal at $4.2 billion, of which, 22% contribution came from domestic investors, according to a report by Anarock. The Delhi-NCR market received 32% of the total investment, while office assets garnered 40%. Foreign investors brought in more than 75%. PE inflows had stood at $4.2 billion in FY22. Investments by domestic investors rose 50% in FY23 ($0.9 billion) over the previous year ($0.6 billion). PTI

InCred Alternative unveils ₹1,000-crore equity fund

InCred Alternative Investments on Friday unveiled its first equity long-short open-ended fund with a targeted asset under management of ₹1,000 crore. The fund seeks to generate alpha returns independent of market volatility and intends to deploy a spectrum of long-short strategies across futures, options and special situations for appropriate diversification, Bhupinder Singh, founder and group chief executive officer of InCred, said. PTI

Nippon India MF folio count surges to almost 2 crore

Growing awareness and ease of transactions via digital push led Nippon India Mutual Fund's investor accounts to surge to almost 2 crore at the end of FY22-23, making it the largest fund house in terms of folio count, CEO Sundeep Sikka said. Its folio count increased from 99.82 lakh in March 2021 to 1.7 crore in March 2022 and finally to 1.96 crore in March 2023, according to data compiled by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI). PTI

Textile, apparel exports decline 14%

Segment contributed 7.95% to goods exports, compared with 9.8% in FY22; last fiscal was 'bad', says export promotion council ED Rajagopal, while also pointing out that March cotton textile exports crossing $1 billion lends hope for the future

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Textile and apparel exports contracted 14% in 2022-2023 compared with the previous year.

At $41.3 billion exports in 2021-2022, textiles and apparel constituted 9.79% of total goods exports. However, in 2022-2023, the segment recorded exports of $35.5 billion and constituted just 7.95% of goods exports.

'Imports rise'

While apparel exports grew 1.1% last financial year ($16.1 billion) compared with the previous year ($16.01 billion), textile exports shrank 23.3% to $19.3 billion last fiscal. Meanwhile import of yarn, fabrics and made-ups rose 26.7%.

Grey and gloomy

Exports of apparel and textiles slumped to $35.5 billion in FY23, compared with $41.3 billion in the previous year

- Inventory with international buyers and high cotton prices in India last year contributed to dip in exports
- Now, buyers are resuming sourcing for their needs
- Trade members have sought a policy that imposed no restrictions on raw materials

According to Siddhartha Rajagopal, executive director of Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, "It was an exceptional (bad) year for cotton textiles. However, in March 2023, cotton textile exports crossed $1 billion, which is giving hope. It is an encouraging sign and the hope [is that] the momentum will be maintained."

'High inventory'

Mr. Rajagopal said a couple of factors that affected exports this year were the huge inventory that was with the international buyers and the high cotton prices in India last year.

The inventory with buyers had affected orders to countries such as Bangladesh too. Now, the buyers are resuming sourcing for their needs, he said.

Industry sources here added that there should be a stable raw material policy - be it for cotton or man-made fibres. There should not be any restriction on raw materials, they said.

Naren Goenka, chairman of Apparel Export Promotion Council, said in a press release that India had ramped up its global apparel exports in 2022-2023 despite the Russia-Ukraine war, sluggish demand in major garment importing countries, stiff competition by other major apparel manufacturing countries, and volatility in raw material prices in the beginning of the year.

India's forex reserves rise $6.3 bn to $584.75 bn

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

India's forex reserves increased by $6.306 billion to $584.755 billion for the week ended April 7, the RBI said on Friday. In the last reporting week, the forex kitty snapped a two-week rising trend to decline by $329 million to $578.45 billion.

It can be noted in October 2021, reserves reached an all-time high of $645 billion. Reserves have been declining as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused by global developments.

NCLT grants 90 more days to Future to conclude insolvency

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The NCLT has granted Future Retail Ltd. (FRL) an extension of 90 days for concluding its Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).

Allowing FRL's plea, the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) extended the deadline to July 15.

"NCLT on April 13, 2023, heard the application and granted the said exclusion of 90 days from CIRP of FRL and consequent extension for completion of CIRP till July 15, 2023," FRL said in a regulatory filing.

The order was pronounced orally by NCLT and a "written order is awaited," FRL added. The CIRP was initiated against FRL by NCLT on July 20 last year, following loan default.

G-20 Finance Ministers discuss debt distress, Ukraine and other challenges

Sriram Lakshman
WASHINGTON DC

Food and energy insecurity, climate change, recent risks to financial stability were also discussed

G-20 countries discussed the debt distress of poor and middle-income countries, challenges to the global economy, including Ukraine, and a raft of issues from cryptocurrency risk to transparency in international taxation, as the group's Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) met here on April 12 and 13.

This was their second meeting under the year-long G-20 presidency of India after the first meeting in February in Bengaluru.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who co-chaired the meetings with Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das, offered an optimistic picture of the discussions surrounding countries that are experiencing sovereign debt distress.

Asked about the discussions around Ukraine and whether there would be a communique, Ms. Sitharaman indicated having a communique was not part of the agenda.

"In this meeting, I think we were very clear that we are not talking about a communique or a Chair's Statement," Ms. Sitharaman said at a press conference following the meeting, pointing to February's Chair's Statement.

The February meeting had an Outcome Document and Chair's Statement (and not a joint communique), because Russia and China had opposed language around Russia's invasion of Ukraine and no consensus could be reached around that part of the message.

The objective of this week's meetings, as per a press statement, was to discuss progress made in the G-20 Finance Track on deliverables decided in the Chair's Summary and Outcome Document from February.

"Members discussed the key challenges to the global economic outlook, including the war in Ukraine, food and energy insecurity, climate change, and recent risks to financial stability," according to the press statement.

A third FMCBG meeting is scheduled for July this year in Gandhinagar, in the State of Gujarat.

Pharma FY23 exports at $25.4 bn falls short of $27-billion target

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

India's pharmaceutical exports totalled $25.39 billion in FY23, a shade better than the previous fiscal but short of the $27 billion target as headwinds, including impact of the Russia-Ukraine war, hampered the pace of growth.

Compared with $24.6 billion in 2021-22, this was a more than a 3% increase and came in the face of higher raw material prices, more outgo on freight and the continued focus of global aid agencies on COVID,

Russia-Ukraine war and higher raw material prices impacted shipments of pharmaceuticals

according to Pharmexcil Director General Ravi Udaya Bhaskar.

Export of vaccines, in value terms, showed a decline of about 80% with non-governmental and aid agencies which procure medicines and vaccines for distribution to beneficiaries in low-income countries channelling most funds for COVID work.

This translated into a lower offtake of other vaccines, especially those used as part of universal immunisation programme, and drugs, including for HIV and tuberculosis.

A contraction in the important market of Africa, on account of an economic slowdown, as well as in the CIS countries, primarily in Russia on account of the war and sanctions, were key factors that weighed on performance.

North America, especially the U.S., continued to be the top market.

Tata Motors to raise PV prices from May 1

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Tata Motors Ltd. said it would marginally increase the prices of its passenger vehicles (PVs) from May 1.

"The weighted average increase will be 0.6%, depending on the variant and model," the company said.

The company said it had been absorbing a significant portion of the increased costs on account of regulatory changes and rise in overall input costs and "is hence compelled to pass on some proportion through this hike," it said.

The company sells a range of PVs, including cars such as Tiago, Tigor and Altroz; and SUVs such as Punch, Nexon and Harrier with prices ranging from ₹5.54 lakh-₹25 lakh.

In February, it had raised prices across its ICE portfolio of PVs at an average of 1.2%.

(With PTI inputs)

SIDBI to fund purchase of 50,000 EVs

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has announced via a campaign that it would provide finance for the purchase of 50,000 electric vehicles (EVs) in India.

Under direct lending, SIDBI will grant loans to eligible MSMEs for purchase of electric vehicles and developing charging infrastructure including battery swapping.

The indirect scheme is targeted at NBFCs and shall enable access to funds.

TVS Srichakra rolls out superbike tyres

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

TVS Srichakra announced the roll-out of its 'adventure touring' and superbike tyres such as Roadhound, Duratrail and Terrabite.

"These high-performance products have been designed in Europe and [are] built to suit Indian road conditions," said P. Madhavan, EVP, sales and marketing.

"Many of these products are already launched internationally, and we have strong positive initial feedback," Mr. Madhavan added.

Roadhound is a zero-degree, steel-belted radial tyre for superbikes with 'excellent' grip, handling and mileage, the company said. Duratrail offers 'superior' grip for on-off road applications and Terrabite DB+ is a 'robust' tyre built for tough terrains and off-roads, the firm added.

These products, among other range extensions in the motorcycle tubeless category, were unveiled in the presence of cricketer M.S. Dhoni and other CSK players.

Sport

Guarrotxena does it for Goa against a fighting Gokulam; Jamshedpur makes the semifinals

SUPER CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOZHIKODE

For a side that suffered one of its most humiliating defeats ever in its last match – 1-5 to ATK Mohun Bagan – Gokulam Kerala showed remarkable improvement on Friday. And it didn't concede a goal till the 90th minute in its Group C game against FC Goa in the Super Cup.

But, Gokulam still went down 0-1 to the Goans, with Iker Guarrotxena netting that goal. It was a spirited performance by the two-time I-League champion, playing at home, against the ISL side.

Meanwhile Jamshedpur FC defeated ATK Mohun Bagan 3-0 to post its second successive win, which also earned it a place in the semifinals, with a game in hand. Boris Singh Thangjam (two) and Harry Sawyer were the scorers on this night.

The Goans were on the attack right from the beginning and could have gone ahead in the eighth minute, but Fares Arnaout's header hit the woodwork from a free-kick by Noah Sadaoui, who went on to have an excellent game. Soon after, Guarrotxena's attempt at the goal off a corner kick proved too wide.

The home team defended superbly and goalkeeper K. Shibin Raj did a good job under the bar. But, a defensive error by Abdul Hakku saw Noah Sadaoui winning the ball and Guarrotxena scoring off a rebound. A change in schedule means the last two matches in Group A will be played at the same time. So the match between Sreenidi Deccan and RoundGlass Punjab has been moved to Manjeri.

The game between Kerala Blasters and Bengaluru FC will be played here. Both the matches will kick off at 8.30 p.m.

The results:
FC Goa 1 (Guarrotxena 90) bt Gokulam Kerala 0.
Jamshedpur FC 3 (Boris Singh Thangjam 22 & 42, Harry Sawyer 90+5) bt ATK MB 0.

Skilful: Noah Sadaoui had an excellent game for FC Goa against Gokulam Kerala. K. RAGESH

AIFF mandates minimum contract money for IWL players

FOOTBALL

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Women footballers in the Hero Indian Women's League (IWL) will get a minimum of ₹3.2 lakh from the next season. This was part of the decisions taken by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) in its executive committee meeting here on Friday.

Announcing the decisions, AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey explained that it would be mandatory for the top-eight teams in the IWL to have a minimum of 10 Indians for a minimum contract sum.

The 2024-25 season will have 10 teams in the top division, besides two other divisions.

In the 2025-26 season, plans are in place to have a four-tier league, including the state leagues.

It was also decided to ratify the suggestion of the League committee to bar participation of any foreign player in the second division of I-League and in the state championships.

This decision would help the local talents to occupy up to three crucial positions in most teams, currently held by foreign recruits.

Institutional League

The decks were also cleared for the revival of the Institutional League. Ten teams will play on a home-and-away basis.

For the development of the elite players, the house favoured the creation of Project Diamond.

The FIFA Talent Development Scheme (TDS) is expected to play a proactive part in this project.

FIFA's chief of Global Football Development Arsene Wenger heads the TDS.

The TDS officials are expected to visit India early next month.

A grassroot programme titled Blue Cubs was also announced.

This is part of AIFF's Vision 2047 programme that aims to attract 35 million children by 2026 and raise the number to 100 million by 2047 to mark the country's 100 years of independence.

COMFORTING WORDS

This is the worst, you can't go any lower than this: Tewatia tells Dayal

Yash Dayal was provided with enough support by his IPL franchise, Gujarat Titans, after conceding five successive sixes in its last outing, his teammate Rahul Tewatia said. "This is the worst, you can't go any lower than this'," said the 29-year-old, of his chat with Dayal.

CLASS APART

Gill will dominate world cricket for next decade or so: Hayden

Gujarat Titans opener Shubman Gill garnered a lot of praise from former Australia batting legend Matthew Hayden, who said, "Titans needed someone to take responsibility against Punjab and Gill did just that. Some of the shots were pleasing. He's a class player and is going to dominate world cricket for the next decade or so."

PAYING THE PRICE

Titans skipper Hardik Pandya fined for slow over rate

Gujarat Titans skipper Hardik Pandya has been fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate in the match against Punjab Kings in Mohali on Thursday. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Pandya was fined ₹12 lakh," said an IPL media advisory.

HIGH PRESSURE ROLE

Prabhsimran Singh can be very dangerous: says Haddin

Young opener Prabhsimran Singh plays in a "high pressure" role and could be "dangerous" once he finds consistency, feels Punjab Kings assistant coach Brad Haddin. The 22-year-old smashed a 34-ball 60 against Royals, but was out for ducks in the next two games. But, Haddin backed the opener to come good in the upcoming games.

Brook sets the tone for Sunrisers' win as KKR falls short of a daunting target

The opener finally proves his worth as he notches up an unbeaten century — the first of this edition; skipper Markram joins the party as the two plunder runs at will against a hapless attack; Rana and Rinku's valiant half-centuries go in vain for Kolkata Knight Riders

IPL-16

Y. B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Englishman Harry Brook proved his worth as a dangerous batter as he scored this edition's first hundred (100 n.o., 55b, 12x4, 3x6) to guide Sunrisers Hyderabad to a 23-run victory over Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League at the Eden Gardens here on Friday.

Inserted, SRH amassed 228 for four, the highest total of IPL-16, and then restricted KKR to 205 for seven, despite Nitish Rana and Rinku Singh's valiant half-centuries. This was Sunrisers' second straight win.

The 24-year-old Brook excelled with his timing and placement. Mixing proper cricketing shots with improvised strokes, Brook punished new ball bowlers Umesh Yadav and Lockie Ferguson.

Andre Russell provided KKR some relief by sending back Mayank Agarwal and Rahul Tripathi in the fifth over.

However, Brook and captain Aiden Markram (50, 26b, 2x4, 5x6), who played some breathtaking shots, plundered runs to add 72.

Brook, who was let off on 45 and used the DRS to survive a caught behind decision on 61, continued with unwavering focus. He spectacularly hit Ferguson for five fours in the 15th over.

Finding his touch: Brook mixed proper cricketing shots with improvised strokes during his knock. K.R. DEEPAK

Left-hander Abhishek Sharma (32, 17b, 3x4, 2x6) showed his firepower to put on 72 runs with Brook, who achieved his personal landmark in the final over.

In reply, Kolkata lost Rahmanullah Gurbaz to Bhuvneshwar in the first over and Venkatesh Iyer and Sunil Narine to Marco Jansen in the fourth.

Nitish Rana took the fight to Sunrisers as he swung his bat to clobber Umran Malik for 28 runs, including four fours and two sixes, in the sixth over.

The Knight Riders skipper added 62 with N. Jagadeesan (36, 21b, 5x4, 1x6), who made an important contribution.

Russell, who took three wickets but struggled to complete three overs due to fitness issues, fell cheaply to the accurate Mayank Markande to leave KKR struggling at 96 for five. Rana (75, 41b, 5x4, 6x6), who played most of his shots on the onside and was dropped when he was on 68, and last match's hero Rinku, who took the DRS to survive on 15 and was dropped on 47, were involved in a partnership of 69.

The KKR skipper was taken at deep cover by Washington Sundar off left-armer T. Natarajan trying to go for another six. Rinku (58 n.o, 31b, 4x4, 4x6) sparkled but the target was too tall as Kolkata Knight Riders fell short by 23 runs.

Next assignment

KKR: Apr. 16 vs. **MI**
Mumbai, 3.30 p.m.

SRH: Apr. 18 vs. **MI**
Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	4	3	1	6	1.588
Lucknow Super Giants	4	3	1	6	1.048
Gujarat Titans	4	3	1	6	0.341
Kolkata Knight Riders	4	2	2	4	0.711
Chennai Super Kings	4	2	2	4	0.225
Punjab Kings	4	2	2	4	-0.226
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	2	2	4	-0.822
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3	1	2	2	-0.800
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	2	-0.879
Delhi Capitals	4	0	4	0	-1.576

After the KKR-SRH match on April 14

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Harry Brook (not out) 100 *(55b, 12x4, 3x6)*, Mayank Agarwal c Varun b Russell 9 *(13b)*, Rahul Tripathi c Gurbaz b Russell 9 *(4b, 2x4)*, Aiden Markram c Russell b Varun 50 *(26b, 2x4, 5x6)*, Abhishek Sharma c Thakur b Russell 32 *(17b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Heinrich Klaasen (not out) 16 *(6b, 2x4, 1x6)*; Extras (w-11, nb-1): 12; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 228.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-46 (Mayank, 4.1 overs), 2-57 (Tripathi, 4.6), 3-129 (Markram, 12.5), 4-201 (Abhishek, 18.1).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Umesh 3-0-42-0, Ferguson 2-0-37-0, Narine 4-0-28-0, Russell 2.1-0-22-3, Varun 4-0-41-1, Suyash 4-0-44-0, Thakur 0.5-0-14-0.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Umran b Bhuvneshwar 0 (3b), N. Jagadeesan c sub (Phillips) b Markande 36 (21b, 5x4, 1x6), Venkatesh Iyer (Impact Player in place of Suyash Sharma) c Markram b Jansen 10 (11b, 2x4), Sunil Narine c Markram b Jansen 0 (1b), Nitish Rana c Washington b Natarajan 75 (41b, 5x4, 6x6), Andre Russell c Jansen b Markande 3 (6b), Rinku Singh (not out) 58 (31b, 4x4, 4x6), Shardul Thakur c Washington b Umran 12 (7b, 2x4), Umesh Yadav (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-2, nb-2, w-6): 10; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 205.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-0 (Gurbaz, 0.3 overs), 2-20 (Venkatesh, 3.2), 3-20 (Narine, 3.3), 4-82 (Jagadeesan, 8.2), 5-96 (Russell, 10.1), 6-165 (Rana, 16.3), 7-197 (Shardul, 19.1).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 4-1-29-1, Jansen 4-0-37-2, Natarajan 4-0-54-1, Umran 2-0-36-1, Markande 4-0-27-2, Washington (Impact Player in place of Harry Brook) 2-0-20-0.

Toss: KKR; **PoM:** Brook.
Sunrisers won by 23 runs.

India to welcome Afghanistan for ODI series in June

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

India is set to host Afghanistan in a three-match ODI series in June with an eye on the World Cup. The series will also result in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) roping in an interim broadcaster.

Jay Shah, the BCCI secretary, confirmed both the developments on Friday.

"The Media Rights tender will be released as per schedule this year (June-July) and will depend on the Afghanistan tour, but more likely the process will start from the Australia series (in September," Shah said here during a select-media interaction.

"The Board will speak to all stakeholders concerned and will come up with an interim decision (for broadcaster)."

The Afghanistan series – not included in the Future Tours Programme – will offer captain Rohit Sharma and head coach Rahul Dravid three additional opportunities to try out new combinations ahead of the World Cup, likely to begin from October 5.

The series is likely to start on June 16, five days after the scheduled conclusion of India's World Test Championship final versus Australia.

With the broadcast agreement between the BCCI and Star India having expired at the end of March, it will be interesting to see whether the BCCI floats a tender only for the Afghanistan series.

As Shah hinted, the next four-year media rights tender will begin with India's three ODIs versus Australia in September.

Jay Shah. FILE PHOTO

The series will also result in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) roping in an interim broadcaster
The next four-year media rights tender will begin with India's three ODIs versus Australia in September
WPL to switch to a home-and-away format from its second edition in 2024

WPL format

Meanwhile, confirming that the Women's Premier League (WPL) will switch to a home-and-away format from its second edition in 2024, Shah also admitted that the BCCI is considering switching the WPL to the Diwali window.

"We are mulling the possibility of scheduling the WPL, in the home and away format, in the Diwali window; not two seasons in a year but just a different time window," Shah said.

"Women's cricket now has a dedicated audience base and this number will only keep growing as we expect an encouraging turnout at the next WPL."

Royal Challengers and Delhi Capitals in search of that much-needed victory

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) and Delhi Capitals (DC) will be desperate for a win when they meet at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Saturday afternoon.

RCB, after a rousing start to its campaign, has lost two in two, while DC is winless after four contests, rooted to the bottom of the table.

RCB may have lost its previous fixture, at home to Lucknow Super Giants, off the last ball and by a solitary wicket, but the happenings will worry the faithful.

Virat Kohli and Faf du Plessis both struggled against spin, and in the absence of Yuzvendra Chahal – who was released ahead of the 2022 season – its own tweakers seemed clueless as to how to bowl on a batter-friendly ground with small boundaries. RCB will hope that Wanindu Hasaranga's availability will solve this problem.

Time to fire: DC will hope Sarfaraz and Warner improve their strike rate to help the side pick up its first points. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

DC too was defeated in its previous match (vs. Mumbai Indians) off the last ball, but showed competitive spirit after being thoroughly outplayed in the first three games.

Anrich Nortje impressed with his raw pace and Axar Patel's with his explosive lower-order batting.

But skipper David Warner's low strike-rate – despite his consistency in scoring runs - and the middle-order's meagre returns have set the tongues wagging.

There is however no better place to cure all of your batting ills than Bengaluru.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Bengaluru, 3.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **28**
RCB 17 | DC 10 | NR 1
PREVIOUS MEETING
RCB won by 16 runs, 2022

Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **1**
LSG 1 | PBKS 0
ONLY MEETING
LSG won by 20 runs, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Choice of playing surface will be of much interest as Kings take on Super Giants

Ayan Acharya
LUCKNOW

A struggling Punjab Kings will look to turn the tide when it faces Lucknow Super Giants at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Saturday.

Super Giants have depth in batting and bowling with the likes of Marcus Stoinis, Krunal Pandya and Deepak Hooda in the team.

Bending his back: Wood has been bowling at express pace, making it difficult for batters to get him away. PTI

The form of Avesh Khan, though, will be a concern. He has three wickets in as many games at an economy rate of 11. However, Mark Wood's nine wickets at express pace have been a big boost.

Meanwhile, Liam Livingstone, who could have helped Kings shake off the struggle that the side had in the middle overs against Gujarat Titans, is unlikely to play against Super Giants after pulling a muscle during training just before the Gujarat game.

Punjab Kings continues to have the worst death-overs economy rate (13.11) and is up against a team, in which Nicholas Pooran just smacked the fastest half-century of this IPL.

Kagiso Rabada can prove to be a challenging match-up for him though. In 31 balls to Pooran, Rabada has conceded 39 runs and dismissed him twice.

Lucknow has been smart in utilising the home conditions. Against Delhi Capitals, it played on a red-soil surface and Wood benefited. It then used a black-soil surface against Sunrisers Hyderabad and its spinners wreaked havoc.

The choice of playing surface will be of much interest.

INBRIEF

ECB probing McCullum's betting advertisements

Head coach Brendon McCullum's appearance in online betting advertisements has landed him in a fix with the ECB probing if it is in breach of anti-corruption rules. McCullum had appeared in online advertisements after joining *22Bet* as an ambassador in January. He had shared a video on his Facebook page on March 27 promoting *22Bet's* markets on the IPL. "We are exploring the matter and are in discussions with Brendon around his relationship with *22Bet*," the ECB was quoted by *BBC*.

Fritz stuns Tsitsipas to set up semifinal clash with Rublev

American Taylor Fritz upset two-time defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-2, 6-4 to reach the Monte Carlo Masters semifinals on Friday. Second-seeded Tsitsipas was on a 12-match winning streak on the French Cote d'Azur, where he claimed his two Masters 1000 titles. Fritz will next face fifth-seeded Andrey Rublev of Russia, who beat German qualifier Jan-Lennard Struff 6-1, 7-6(5).

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: MTV, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 4.30 & 7.30 a.m.

World Chess championship: FIDE & Chess.com YouTube channels, 2.30 p.m. onwards.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.

ATP: Monte Carlo Masters: Sony LIV, 5 p.m. onwards.

Super Cup football: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 5 & 8.30 p.m.

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday).

Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday).

Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 & 10 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 & 10 p.m.

Manchester United hard done by late Sevilla goals

The Spaniards get a helping hand from the Red Devils; Juventus gets the better of Sporting while Feyenoord edges ahead of Roma and Leverkusen is held by Union Saint-Gilloise

Tough luck: United's Maguire, left, hands Sevilla a lifeline with an injury time own goal to level the scores. REUTERS

EUROPA LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Manchester United's Europa League quarterfinal tie against Sevilla is finely poised after two late own goals allowed the Spanish side to leave Old Trafford with a 2-2 draw in Thursday's first leg.

Elsewhere there were narrow home wins for Juventus and Feyenoord while Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen was held to a 1-1 draw by Belgian visitor Union Saint-Gilloise.

Erik ten Hag's United is the favourite to win this season's competition and it looked to be cruising towards the semifinals as it seized a two-goal first-half lead thanks to a brace by Marcel Sabitzer.

It could have been out of sight after the break but Antony hit the post at the end of a counterattack and United also saw central defensive duo Raphael Varane and Lisandro Martinez both come off injured.

Sevilla produced a remarkable late comeback, reducing the deficit in the 84th minute when Tyrell Malacia let a ball go past him in the box and then deflected a Jesus Navas cross into his own net.

It then equalised in the second minute of added time when a Youssef En-Nesyri header went in via a big touch off Harry Maguire, who had come on for Varane.

A Sevilla side, which has won the Europa League or its predecessor the UEFA Cup a record six times, may now fancy its chances of winning the tie in next week's return in Spain.

"We conceded two own goals, bad luck, and we have to deal with it," said Ten Hag. "We have to learn to kill the game, but still everything is open."

The winner of this tie will face either Juventus or Sporting of Portugal in the last four and the Turin giant claimed a 1-0 victory in the first leg of their quarter-final.

Federico Gatti scored the only goal of the game in the 73rd minute.

Mats Wieffer scored the only goal of the game early in the second half as Dutch league leader Feyenoord beat Jose Mourinho's Roma 1-0 in the first leg of a tie that is a repeat of last season's Europa Conference League final, won by the Italian side.

Union Saint-Gilloise took the lead away to Leverkusen through a strike by Nigerian striker Victor Boniface early in the second half, only for Florian Wirtz to score a late equaliser.

The results: Quarterfinal (first leg): Feyenoord 1 (Wieffer 53) bt Roma 0; Manchester United 2 (Sabitzer 14, 21) drew with Sevilla 2 (Malacia 84-og, Maguire 90+2-og); Juventus 1 (Gatti 73) bt Sporting 0; Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Wirtz 82) drew with Union Saint-Gilloise 1 (Boniface 51).

Ankita fights hard, but Japan proves top class

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Ankita Raina played hard but could not stop Japan from registering a 3-0 victory in a league match of the Asia-Oceania Billie Jean King Cup women's tennis tournament in Tashkent on Friday.

Ankita went down 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 to the 136th ranked Uchijima.

Japan was comfortably on top of the table among the six teams, competing on a round-robin format.

China beat Thailand 3-0 to keep its qualification aspirations alive after having been shocked by Korea earlier.

India will play Korea in the last league match. Having beaten Thailand and Uzbekistan, India stays safe in the group, and would be playing for pride against Korea, which has a slightly better record in terms of sets and games.

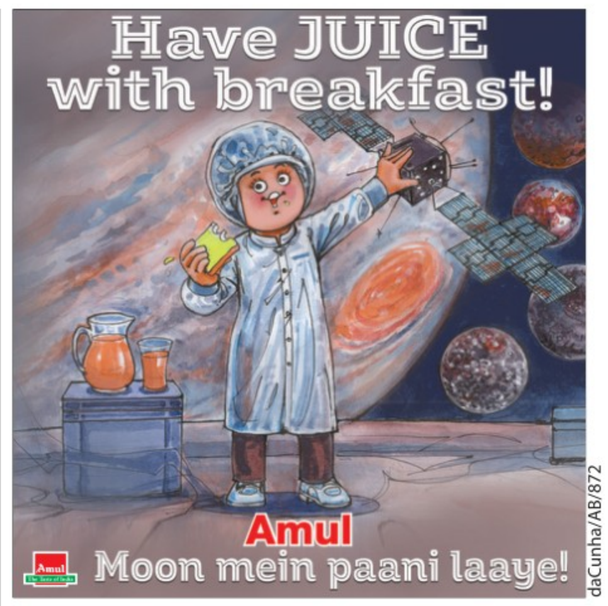
The results (league):
Japan bt India 3-0 (Mai Hontama bt Rutuja Bhosale 6-1, 6-0; Moyuka Uchijima bt Ankita Raina 6-2, 5-7, 6-3; Shuko Aoyama & Eri Hozumi bt Vaidehi Chaudhari & Sahaja Yamalapalli 6-3, 6-4).

Bhambri & Myneni lose quarterfinals

Sports Bureau

Yuki Bhambri and Saketh Myneni lost 6-2, 6-4 to Dustin Brown and Tim Sandkaulen in the doubles quarterfinals of the $160,000 Challenger tennis tournament in Sarasota, USA.

Other result:
Quarterfinals: $15,000 ITF women, Monastir: Naima Karamoko (Sui) & Nina Radovanovic (Fra) bt Jennifer luikham & Julia Stamatova (Bul) 6-4, 6-2.



daCunha/AB/872

Catching up

In good spirits: Rishabh Pant, who is at the National Cricket Academy for recovery and rehab, has a word with Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Somnath Ghosh to debut as UTT coach

Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

Somnath Ghosh has been a new entrant among the Indian coaches for the fourth edition of Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT), the franchise table tennis league that's set to return in July after a three-year hiatus. The coaches' draft will be held in May.

Ghosh, with Arjuna Award recipient Sreeja Akula as his most famous protege, will thus joins veterans A. Muralidhara Rao and N. Ravichandran along with seasoned coaches Anshul Garg, Sachin Shetty and Parag Agrawal in the Indian coaches' line-up.

The UTT makes an Indian and international coach available to each of the six franchises.

Timina returns

A UTT statement confirmed the return of four-times Olympian Elena Timina and former Germany women's head coach Jorg Bitzigeio to the tournament, scheduled to be played in Pune from July 13 to 30.

The other overseas coaches include Francisco Santos, former Porutgal men's coach, Slobodan Grujic, Vesna Ojstersek and Zoltan Batorfi.

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